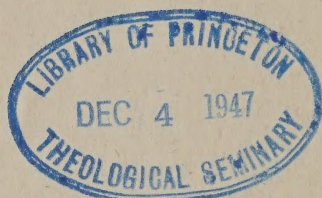


BF1031
.C312

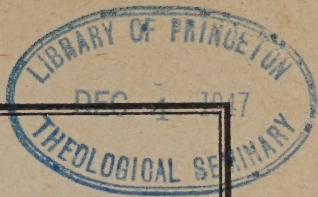


BF1031
.C312

PSYCHIC SCIENCE AND SURVIVAL

ALSO BY *Hereward Carrington*

The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism
The Coming Science
Eusapia Palladino: and Her Phenomena
Death: Its Causes and Phenomena
Personal Experiences in Spiritualism
Hindu Magic
The Problems of Psychical Research
True Ghost Stories
Psychical Phenomena and the War
Modern Psychical Phenomena
Your Psychic Powers: and How to Develop Them
Higher Psychical Development
Spiritualism (with Dr. James J. Walsh)
The Projection of the Astral Body (with Sylvan J. Muldoon)
The Story of Psychic Science
Houdini and Conan Doyle (with B. M. L. Ernst)
A Primer of Psychical Research
Loaves and Fishes
The Psychic World
Laboratory Investigations into Psychic Phenomena
Psychology: in the Light of Psychic Phenomena
The Invisible World



Psychic Science AND SURVIVAL

By Hereward Carrington

DIRECTOR, AMERICAN PSYCHICAL SOCIETY



New York
THE BEECHHURST PRESS

Copyright, 1947, by Hereward Carrington
Printed in the United States of America

BOOK DESIGN BY SIDNEY SOLOMON

Contents

	PAGE
PART 1	9
PART 2	71
PART 3	109
APPENDICES	
<i>Spiritual and Psychical Researchers</i>	132
<i>If Survival Were Generally Accepted</i>	137

PSYCHIC SCIENCE AND SURVIVAL

I

"In the decline of life I ask myself sometimes, 'Have I in truth done well, to have devoted so much time and toil and money to the study and the publication of facts in this domain? Have I not struck into a blind road? followed an illusive hope? Have I not wasted my existence, with no result to justify all my pains?' Yet always I seem to hear the same reply: 'A life on earth can have no higher aspiration than to demonstrate the transcendental nature of man's being—to prove him called to a destiny loftier than the phenomenal existence which alone he knows.' I cannot, then, regret that I have devoted my whole life to the pursuance of this aim; although it be by methods which Science shuns or spurns—methods which I hold far trustier than any other which Science has to show. And if it be in the end my lot to have laid one stone of that temple of the Spirit, upbuilt from century to century by men of true heart—this will be the highest and the only recompense which ever I strove to gain."

—COUNT ALEXANDER N. AKSAKOF.

THE SENTIMENT EMBODIED IN COUNT AKSAKOF'S FINE statement is one which I have endeavored to emulate through the forty-eight years of my association with this field of work. And truly some such ideal is necessary, for it is no easy road to travel. It is one beset with pitfalls on every hand, where failures are constantly cropping up, and where "success"—if such it may be termed—consists merely in championing an unpopular cause, resulting in ridicule from the general public and often from one's immediate associates.

I have often stated, half facetiously, that psychical research is the most fascinating and at the same time the most annoying study in the world! Nevertheless it represents, as I believe, not alone the “coming science,” and a body of important scientific truths, but also the germ of a Cosmic philosophy which can be built upon these facts and these alone—a philosophy enabling us to formulate a rational interpretation of the Universe—clarifying and illuminating the meaning and destiny of life.

Psychical Research, as we endeavor to pursue it, consists primarily in the investigation of certain odd and bizarre phenomena which are not yet included in any of the official sciences. Telepathy, clairvoyance, apparitions, premonitions, mediumistic manifestations, and so on, are included in this strange mélange—phenomena which are, unfortunately, for the most part unrecognized and rejected with scorn by official science.

In the public mind, this research is often identified with popular Spiritualism, but it must be emphasized that they are not the same thing. Spiritualism is a religio-philosophical system, built upon a set of facts, or alleged facts, and to that extent is a religion—as Conan Doyle so frequently stated. Psychical research, on the other hand, is merely an impartial, systematic investigation of these alleged facts themselves, with a view to determining their reality and (if valid) their *modus operandi*. Our contention is that it is possible to be just as scientific

in the investigation of these phenomena as any others. Science consists not so much in a body of facts as a *method*. The facts of science are constantly changing, the method never. It is possible, we believe, to be quite scientific in the investigation of (say) a haunted house, and quite unscientific in the analysis of table-salt! It all depends upon the personality of the investigator and the manner in which he conducts his investigations.

It is this fact which, in the opinion of many of us, constitutes psychical research a true science. Once the subject-matter of the investigations be granted as actually existing, it will find its place among the other official sciences.

It must not be thought that the modern psychic investigator is insensible to the trend of thought today—the evidences of evolution, the spread of rationalism in religion, the mechanistic advances and theories of the various branches of science. He realizes these quite as fully as the most confirmed skeptic. At the same time he reveres, above all else, *facts*; and believes that if mechanistic philosophy is founded upon a view of life which entirely ignores a whole body of phenomena, then that philosophy will have to be remolded so as to include them. The old adage, “if the facts do not agree with my philosophy, then so much the worse for the facts!” is perhaps a case of putting the cart before the horse. The facts are the really essential things. Modern physiology contends, it is true, that thought is a function of the

brain, and that consequently it cannot exist without it; but if certain observed phenomena prove the contrary, this view must be given up. If mind and thought can be shown to exist apart from brain, then some new theory as to their relationship evidently must be formulated.

Traditional orthodox theology, on the other hand, has nothing more definite to offer than bare assertions, coupled with its claim of divine inspiration. It is practically devoid of *evidence*. Those who choose to believe its teachings are of course privileged to do so, but the scientist wants *facts*. He says, "Where is your *evidence* that any such thing as a soul exists at all? I fail to find indications of it anywhere in nature." And, apart from these psychical and spiritualistic phenomena, *there is no evidence!* No direct proof is otherwise obtainable. Only by isolating an individual spiritual entity, and proving its separate existence and independence—by means of direct contact with it—can such proof of its reality be obtained. There is no other way. When Sir William Ramsay isolated argon in the atmosphere, he proved its existence by thus isolating it, and saying, "Here it is!" Similarly, we can only prove the reality of "spirit" by thus isolating it, as it were, and obtaining proof of its continued existence and personal identity. This can only be done by some method of direct "communication." We must not begin by assuming the existence—or non-existence—of some spiritual world, and then arguing as to its nature, or the possibility of communication after-

wards. We must prove the existence of such a world by reason of these very communications; and, if they are shown not to be such, we must give up the idea of a spiritual world altogether.

It is indeed paradoxical, to many of us, that the churches as a body oppose this investigation, ridicule its phenomena, and do everything in their power to block and hinder it, when it represents the only hope of proving the very things they have been teaching for centuries. Immortality is certainly one of the pillars of every Western religion, and without this central teaching these religions would soon collapse. One would think that the churches would array themselves solidly behind this attempt on the part of science to support their fundamental tenet, instead of fighting and opposing it. They argue and bicker on points of theological dogma instead of uniting in a common cause. But I venture to predict that, with the rapid spread of skepticism and mechanistic science, there will be, within relatively few years, no churches left to bicker—if these psychic phenomena be not proven true. On the other hand, if the validity of psychic phenomena be established, then indeed the reality of some invisible world must be accepted—not as a theory, not as an act of faith, but as a proven fact. This psychic science of ours may yet prove to be in the words of Frederic Myers, “the preamble to all religions.”

It is true that these facts are not, as yet, recognized by the majority of scientists as actually existent, and

until a goodly number of them are convinced, the general public will not be convinced either. It has been said, in America, that "once the scientific men are converted, the Sunday newspapers will be also, and once the Sunday newspapers are, then the public will immediately follow in consequence!" This may be a whimsical way of stating the case, but it doubtless represents a fundamental truth. Psychic facts are passing through the same triple crucible as have facts in all the other sciences: (1) Hostility and scornful rejection; (2) Partial acceptance, with attempts to incorporate these facts into one or other of the official sciences, and find "naturalistic" explanations for them; (3) Complete acceptance as a matter-of-course, represented by that oft-heard expression "I told you so!"

The phenomena which constitute the subject-matter of psychical research are generally referred to as "supernormal." By this term we do not mean supernatural—meaning by this something which happens contrary to the established laws of Nature. It is our belief that, if any alleged event actually occurs, it must belong to some order of nature, otherwise it could not possibly happen. But it may be that the event in question belongs to some larger order of nature than is represented by the science of today. It may necessitate some larger view of nature, in order to include and explain it. It is a mere platitude to say that the "impossible" of one generation is an accepted fact to the next. The radio, X-rays, spec-

trum analysis, the airplane, the phonograph and the telephone are all examples of this. An event may, then, be definitely supernormal, in the sense that it is unknown or unusual; but it is never supernatural, in the old theological sense of the term.

This may be, perhaps, a good place in which to refer to one or two examples of such intolerant bigotry and incredulity. Scientific men of today are wont to shake their heads when referring to Galileo and the men of his day, who refused to look through his telescope "for fear of being convinced." Yet this finds an exact parallel in the case of Sir William Crookes who—when investigating the famous medium D. D. Home—asked a number of members of the Royal Society to visit his laboratory and test him themselves, in any manner they saw fit. With one or two exceptions, every one of them refused! Even in our own day it is next to impossible to induce men of science to test a medium, even when their confrères have stated that, in their estimation, that medium produces remarkable and inexplicable phenomena. It is a matter of common knowledge that practically every invention of startling novelty has been sneered and scoffed at. Flammarion tells us a most amusing episode of this character. He writes:

"I was present one day at a meeting of the Academy of Sciences. It was a day to be remembered for its proceedings were absurd. Du Moncel introduced Edison's phonograph to the learned assembly. When the presentation had been made,

the proper person began quietly to recite the usual formula as he registered it upon the roll. Then a middle-aged academician, whose mind was stored—nay, saturated—with traditions drawn from his culture in the classics, rose, and, nobly indignant at the audacity of the inventor, rushed towards the man who represented Edison, and seized him by the collar, crying: ‘Wretch! we are not to be made dupes of by a ventriloquist!’ This member of the Institute was Monsieur Bouillard. The day was the 11th of March, 1878.

“The most curious thing about it was that, six months later, on September 30th, before a similar assembly, the same man considered himself bound in honor to declare that, after a close examination, he could find nothing in the invention but ventriloquism, and that it was impossible to admit that mere vile metal could perform the work of human phonation. The phonograph, according to his idea of it, was nothing but an *acoustic illusion*.”

M. Eugène Nus dedicated one of his works, *Choses de l'autre monde*, after this amusing fashion:

To the memory of all savants,
Breveted, patented,
Crowned with palms, decorated, and buried,
Who have been opposed to the rotation of the earth,
To meteorites,
To galvanism,
To the circulation of the blood,
To waves of light,
To lightning rods,
To daguerreotypes,
To steam power,
To propellers,
To steamboats,
To railroads,
To lighting by gas,
To magnetism,
And all the rest.

And to all those now living, or who shall yet be born,
 Who do the same thing in this present day,
 Or shall do the same hereafter.

Might we not add to this list also: "to psychic phenomena"?

This opposition of men of science to researches in this field probably has its origin in two factors. These are (1) the amount of fraud which has been detected, and (2) the monistic view they hold today as to the mind-body relationship.

Both these objections are to a certain extent valid. Undoubtedly much fraud has been practiced, especially in this country (America) by professional mediums producing the so-called "physical phenomena." But it should be pointed out that the majority of the exposures which have been made were by psychical researchers themselves; it is largely due to their efforts that trickery of this kind has become commonly and widely known. Competent investigators fully recognize these difficulties, and have prepared themselves for them by a prolonged study of conjuring and the psychology of deception. It is only by understanding and eliminating this fraud—and not by ignoring it—that it will be exposed and finally done away with.¹

The idea that mind and body are somehow *one*, and

¹ For example, my own book *The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, containing over 300 pages of detailed exposition of trick devices of all kinds, is, I believe, considered to be more or less "classic" in this field. Despite my thorough familiarity with magic in all its branches, however, I nevertheless believe firmly in the genuineness of certain "physical phenomena," many of which I have witnessed with my own eyes.

that "mind is a function of the brain"—incapable of existing and functioning in its absence—unquestionably dominates all modern psychology and psychiatry—consciously or subconsciously. It is necessary to emphasize this point, because it is one of the utmost importance. For practical working purposes in psychotherapeutics, this monistic doctrine may be very useful, in the majority of cases, but it should never be lost sight of that there may occasionally be cases which are not explicable on ordinary psychological grounds, and if the mind be closed to such possibilities, all attempts at cure must necessarily remain ineffectual. Furthermore, this doctrine is based upon the assumption that psychic phenomena really *do not exist*; and if one closes one's mind to a whole set of phenomena, one's vision of the Universe must of necessity be limited and erroneous. This we believe to be the case with present-day psychological science.

If genuine psychic phenomena are altogether ignored, it is perhaps quite possible to entertain a nice, closely-knit Universe, based on mechanism, only the details of which remain to be discovered. But if psychic phenomena actually *do exist*, the picture is far otherwise! Then, whole realms of unknown possibilities are opened up, necessitating the reconstruction of some of the fundamental postulates of modern science. And these phenomena, if true, cannot be ignored! I am reminded of the tale of the two scientists, discussing the properties

of a gold-fish in a bowl. Eventually, one of them, in desperation, said: "Let us assume that there is *no gold-fish!*" which is all very well, and doubtless simplifies the problem enormously; but if there *is* a gold-fish in the bowl, such ostrich-philosophy will not serve to dispose of it. And, similarly, if genuine psychic phenomena exist—as we are quite assured they do—some account must be taken of them, and some attempt made to interpret them and dovetail them into the scheme of existing science.

It is only natural, perhaps, that the physiologist should experience the utmost difficulty in conceiving mind apart from brain, since his daily occupation brings him into direct contact with the two in the most intimate and seemingly inseparable relations. It should be less difficult for the physicist, however, to conceive of this possibility, since he is accustomed to dealing with imponderable and intangible energies, resident and active in space—which he has learned to regard as a *plenum* rather than a *vacuum*. In his researches, he does not expect to encounter tissues, cells or molecules in space; merely "invisibles," the effects of which *upon matter* are all that he perceives. If this matter be not present, such energies cannot be detected; yet he knows that they exist and are potentially active in space. Here, then, he is dealing with invisible realities, capable of being detected only when in association with matter, yet real and active in its absence. Surely it is but a step

from this to the theoretical possibility of mental energies or entities similarly existing in space, undetectable to our physical senses, or to laboratory instruments, unless associated with matter or in some way brought into direct contact with it—as they would be, of course, if our brains, sense-organs or laboratory instruments were used in detecting or expressing them. I am not saying that this in any way *proves* the existence of such mental entities; I am merely insisting that their theoretical existence cannot be denied or in any way disproved by physical science.

Psychiatrists, particularly, seem disposed to resent bitterly the existence and validity of psychic phenomena. To them I might perhaps quote the words of Professor Hans Driesch, who, in his *Psychical Research* pp. 108-09, says:

“The severe reproach must be brought against the psychologists, with very few exceptions, of all countries, that they do not concern themselves at all with the new field of scientific psychical research, whether by positive work or by theoretical discussion. They leave it on one side, even when they do not deny its very existence, as if they feared to dirty their hands. And if once in a while they do touch the subject it is nearly always from the point of view of questioning the reliability of the phenomena, a thing which would certainly be praiseworthy in and for itself, if only they did not always approach it with the hope of finding fraud. . . .”

Even when psychiatrists do undertake a superficial study of these phenomena, they usually seem to think that all forms of psychic power necessarily represent

abnormal mental and physical conditions—despite the massive weight of human testimony to the contrary. Many of our best mediums have improved in health, character and general mental stability after years of continued work and study. Furthermore it is quite erroneous to suppose that the abnormal mental state which sometimes accompanies mediumship (dissociation, etc.) in itself *explains* the phenomena which are observed in consequence. It does nothing of the sort. One might be quite willing to grant any amount of dissociation, hysteria, or any abnormal state whatsoever, but the central problem would still remain: *How account for the supernormal information* which is frequently given during the trance state? That is the crux of the matter, and is not explained by the alleged or real abnormal condition accompanying these phenomena. In short, the condition is merely coincidental with, and not a cause of, the supernormal manifestations produced.

Another important point: the distinction between *facts* and the *interpretations* of facts. Because a certain phenomenon may be definitely *supernormal*, this does not mean that it is necessarily *spiritistic* in character, as so many seem to think. All sorts of alternative explanations have been advanced by psychical researchers themselves, and it is a well known fact that, while some researchers are Spiritualists, others are not, and are in fact rather strongly opposed to this interpretation of the phenomena

they have studied.¹ A psychic fact does not therefore necessarily imply any particular interpretation, in order to insure its acceptance as such. Many phenomena are undoubtedly supernormal, though they are certainly not spiritistic in origin. All competent psychic investigators recognize these facts.

It is, however, perhaps necessary to emphasize this point, since the majority of persons are inclined to believe that, if any event is not "natural," in the sense that it is fraudulent or illusory, it must therefore be due to "spirits." It should be reiterated that psychical researchers themselves do not hold this view—they themselves contending that only a relatively small percentage of psychic phenomena appear to be spiritistic in character. If this important fact were once clearly recognized, it is highly probable that much of the popular opposition to this subject would automatically disappear.

The general idea that researchers are, for the most part, credulous individuals, having a strong bias and a "will to believe," is far from being the case. As before stated, most of the exposures of fraudulent mediums has been made by investigators themselves, while many highly critical articles have appeared from their pens. As a matter of fact, the standard of evidence maintained

¹ Richet, Sudre, Podmore, Soal, Dingwall, Dodds, etc., are representative of this school; while a long list of names could be given of those who are still "on the fence" regarding any final interpretation of the facts. It should be noted, however, that every one of these men is quite convinced of the genuinely supernormal character of the phenomena.

has been exceptionally high. Years ago, William James wrote:

“In fact, were I asked to point to a scientific journal where hard-headedness and never-sleeping suspicion of sources of error might be seen in their full bloom, I think I should have to fall back on the ‘Proceedings’ of the Society for Psychical Research.” (*The Will to Believe*, pp. 303-04.)

He also speaks of Professor Henry Sidgwick, the first President of the Society, as “the most incorrigibly and exasperatingly critical and skeptical mind in England”; and the long list of subsequent Presidents—nearly all men of eminence in the scientific world—guarantee the high standard which has ever since been maintained.

There is a widespread popular delusion that the majority of psychic investigators, who also happen to be spiritualistic in their attitude, are all men of advanced age, who have adopted their present beliefs because of the loss of some near and dear relative or friend. Such a charge has frequently been leveled at Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, because of the loss of their sons. It is, however, completely untrue. Both these men were seriously interested for many years before the Great War, and both of them had publicly stated their conviction before any personal loss had come to them. The writings of many psychical researchers, who are also spiritualists, do not show the slightest traces of being influenced by their personal prepossessions or beliefs; but are judicial and fair summaries of the evidence pre-

sented. Furthermore, many of our researchers today are relatively young men, who have come into the work well equipped, scientifically, and are thoroughly familiar with the *a priori* objections current in academic circles as to the possible existence of these phenomena. With them, the "will to believe" may be said to play almost no part. It may fairly be urged, on the other hand, that the "will to disbelieve" has played a very important part in the mental attitude of those opposed to such facts, and to this investigation as a whole. Prejudice, hostility and bitter opposition have frequently been seen to take the place of fair and judicial criticism; and when such criticism has been attempted it has usually been of this partisan and even ignorant character. As Dr. Richard Hodgson exclaimed many years ago: "If we could only get the scientific men to attack us, our case would be won!" For the fallacious character of their criticisms could invariably be pointed out—as they have been, many times in the past.

It has frequently been emphasized that the whole trend of modern science—in psychology and biology, especially—has been toward mechanism, and that all the real progress which has been made of late years has been due to this very fact. In a certain sense this is doubtless true—despite the fact that a number of eminent men (Eddington and Jeans in physics, Driesch in biology, etc.) have seriously deviated from this trend. No one questions the legitimacy of adopting mechanism

as a working hypothesis, in these various fields; the only criticism which the psychical researcher would make is that the adoption of this hypothesis has more or less blinded these men to any other possibility; they have made of it almost a religious faith, and have rejected, in consequence, all phenomena not in accord with their working theory. Yet if a number of facts actually exist, contrary to the theory, and incapable of being included within it, it is obvious that the theory itself must be erroneous, or at least too limited in its present purview. These facts may be annoying to those who wish to complete their picture of the Universe at once—believing that practically everything about it has now been discovered; but—aside from the absurdity of such a conception—the facts remain nevertheless, and refuse to be “explained away.” For, as Richet expressed it, in one of his latest books, “the man who today denies the reality of psychic phenomena is not prejudiced—he is merely ignorant.”

And to those who might contend that practically everything is already known concerning this Universe and its laws, I would quote the words of Frederic Myers:

“And yet popular science sometimes speaks as though nearly everything in human nature had been observed already! As though normality had been defined, aberrations classified, a mass of experience acquired which our successors will only have to work out in detail! A vain conceit! a monstrous prematurity! Rather let us remember that only by an abiding consciousness of our own inevitable childishness can we prevent those suc-

cessors from looking on our religions with pity, and on our science with contempt, while they analyse, with a smile, our rudimentary efforts at self-realization, remarking, How hard a thing it was to found the race of man!"

For as James has so forcibly reminded us:

"... an audience of some five or six score people, if each person in it could speak for his own generation, would carry us away to the black unknown of the human species, to days without a document of monument to tell their tale. Is it creditable that such a mushroom knowledge, such a growth overnight as this, *can* represent more than the minutest glimpse of what the Universe will really prove to be when adequately understood? No! Our science is a drop, our ignorance a sea. Whatever else be certain, this at least is certain—that the world of our present natural knowledge is enveloped in a larger world of *some* sort of whose residual properties we at present can have no positive idea." (*The Will to Believe*, pp. 53-54.)

Philosophy, it is true, has speculated concerning the nature of human life and human destiny; but it is unfortunately true that these doctrines have to a great extent contradicted one another, and that no unanimity of opinion is to be found among them. Certain "idealistic" philosophies, to be sure, have postulated a Universe in which Mind is the only reality, and on this view there can hardly be room for serious objection to the doctrine of human survival. The only trouble is that physicists and physiologists have, as a class, rejected this philosophy as impractical and visionary, and it is true that no certain factual data can be advanced in its support; while to the man holding the "common sense" point-of-view, it is obviously fantastic and contradicted by the

hard facts of everyday experience. If these idealistic philosophers based their theories on psychic phenomena, they might then claim some basis for their beliefs, but not one of them, so far as I know, has done so—though here and there one may be found, admitting that these facts support his idealism indirectly.¹ Personally, I am strongly of the opinion of Professor Hyslop, when he stated that “philosophy is useless and worthless for proving a future life.” It may render such an idea intellectually possible, and even probable, but the actual facts upon which any really concrete scheme of the Universe must be built can be supplied only by psychic phenomena; and in no other way can they be supplied.

The question has frequently been raised: What is the practical value and utility of these psychic phenomena, even if true? Of what use are they, if real?

The replies to this are many. In the first place, this is a question which could not legitimately be raised in any purely scientific question. Of what “use” are sun-spots or meteors? None, so far as we can see; they are merely phenomena which happen, and are observed when they occur. To the man-in-the-street, it makes not the slightest difference whether the theory of relativity be true or false: or whether the structure of the atom be this or that. It puts no more money in his pocket, whichever view be true; nor is his life made any longer or happier in consequence. But one could not find a scientific man in the

¹ Schiller, Broad, etc.

world who would take this view. To him it is highly important which theory turns out to be correct, and he often spends his entire life in an endeavor to discover the right answer.

Similarly, if psychic phenomena really exist, this conclusion should in itself, one would think, be of profound interest to him—of even greater interest, in fact, since they bear directly and intimately upon the problems of human life and human destiny. To many of us, it is incredible that vast sums of money and tremendous efforts are expended every year in the exploration of the heavens, in plumbing the depths of the vasty ocean, in exploring the polar regions, where no man will ever dwell, and in sounding the upper atmosphere, where similar conditions exist (interesting as all these investigations are in themselves, doubtless) while not a penny is to be found for the furtherance of this vital question, which so intimately concerns the future of mankind—since all men must ultimately die.

All other sciences (save psychical research) are, relatively, adequately endowed. All others can boast of hosts of enthusiastic and willing workers. In this subject alone—"the Cinderella of the Sciences"—little interest and no adequate support are forthcoming. To many of us, this is a paradoxical and non-understandable phenomenon. As Professor Fournier D'Albe expressed it so vividly:

"The twentieth century is too busy to occupy itself much with the problems presented by death and what follows it. The man

of the world makes his will, insures his life, and dismisses his own death with the scantiest forms of politeness. The churches, once chiefly interested in the ultimate fate of the human soul after death, now devote the bulk of their energies to moral instruction and social amelioration. Death is all but dead as an overshadowing doom and the all-absorbing subject of controversy.

"The spectacle of 2,000,000,000 human beings rushing to their doom, with no definite knowledge of what that doom may be, and yet taking life as it comes, happily and merrily enough as a rule, seems strange and almost unaccountable. The spectacle somewhat resembles that inside a prison during the Reign of Terror, when prisoners passed their time in animated and even gay converse, not knowing who would be called out next and trundled to the scaffold.

"Every year some 40,000,000 human corpses are consigned to the earth. A million tons of human flesh and blood and bone are discarded as of no further service to humanity, to be gradually transformed into other substances and perhaps other forms of life. . . . Meanwhile the human race, in its myriad forms, lives and thrives. . . . The individual perishes, the species survives. . . ."¹

The reason for this strange and paradoxical situation, doubtless, is to be found in the innate skepticism which is so widespread among our younger generation. Taken *en masse*, it is highly probable that they no longer believe in any form of human survival; their motto is "when you're dead you're dead a long time!" Any form of survival has been virtually discarded, together with the effete theological dogmas of which it formed a part. I think that, in a certain sense, this is a wholesome phase; a certain preparation of skepticism and rationalism was necessary in order to free humanity from the

¹ *New Light on Immortality*, pp. 1-3.

yoke of traditional "Churchianity." As Dr. Hyslop used to express it: "Before one can appreciate the importance of psychic phenomena, one has to be innoculated with materialism." But, this once having been done, the mind is left open for the impartial reception of new truths—even should they point to the existence of a superphysical or spiritual world.

This skepticism on the part of the general public is quite intelligible, and is the result of our present system of education. The intellectual output of practically all our institutions of learning is much the same—a grounding in mechanistic science, in which no place is left for spiritual or even psychical realities. As a race, we have become mechanically minded; hence the skepticism of many of our men of science and the major portion of the general public. They are inclined to believe that all talk of spiritual realities is nonsense, and that material things are the only ones of moment. In this, of course, they *may* be right: in fact, if psychical phenomena are not true, they *are* right—since no proof to the contrary is otherwise available. The importance of this subject should now begin to be manifest. Psychical research consists not merely in sitting around a table, listening to silly and trivial messages; it represents rather a science upon which a whole cosmic philosophy may be built, and which would be impossible in their absence. If psychic phenomena occur, some superphysical world

certainly exists; while if they do not, some materialistic philosophy is in my opinion fully justified.

It must always be remembered that psychical research is the *only* science which attempts in any way to answer the question as to man's future. All other sciences deal with man's present or with his past. But if it be conceded that it is even theoretically possible that man *may* have a future not limited by terrene evolution, then any attempt to discover that future must assuredly be recognized as one of the most important and thrilling adventures upon which man can embark, and the upshot of his discoveries would be awaited, one would think, with bated breath, as one of the most fundamental and epoch-making investigations of the age. It is strange indeed that these obvious truths should not be universally recognized by all thinking persons.

It has been objected, in certain quarters, that psychical research is not and never can become a "science," in the strict sense of the word, since its alleged phenomena, even if true, are uncertain and sporadic, and hence do not lend themselves to laboratory investigation. The essence of any true science, it is contended, lies in the fact that such phenomena can be repeated over and over again, by any one who takes the pains to do so, rendering the facts certain, inasmuch as they can be repeated at will. This, it is contended, is the essence of any true science, and psychical phenomena do not lend themselves to this sort of investigation.

The replies to this are two-fold. In the first place, it may be said that many psychic phenomena *do* lend themselves to just this sort of repeated experimentation; they can be tried over and over again, with the same subjects, and under more or less identical conditions. Further, many of these phenomena have of late years been studied in laboratories—instrumental tests and checks being applied, with striking results. Many psychic facts, then, *do* lend themselves to this exact method of experimentation.

In the second place, it may be pointed out that, even within the sphere of orthodox science, there are many phenomena which do not lend themselves to this form of laboratory experimentation. There are also phenomena which must be *observed*—natural occurrences which cannot be controlled by man, but which can at best be caught during the few fleeting moments of their manifestation. Among these may be mentioned meteors, eclipses, lightning flashes, tornadoes, the aurora borealis, “St. Elmo’s Fire,” the transit of Venus, and a thousand other phenomena which cannot be controlled and repeated at will, but which must be observed as accurately as possible during their occurrence. Certain psychic phenomena are likewise of this character, and it would be just as illogical to contend that these are incapable of being included within the purview of science, for this reason, as it would be to contend that any of the above phenomena are incapable of being included within it,

for the same reason—that they are fleeting, sporadic and incapable of being repeated at will.

“But,” it may be replied, “the reality of psychic phenomena has never been *proved*.” It all depends upon what is implied by this word “proof.” If by it is meant a mathematical certitude such as that expressed in e.g., a chemical equation, then it is doubtless true that this sort of certitude has not been attained. But is this obtainable in many other branches of science? Even in classical physics, how about Heisinger’s Principle of Uncertainty? And the behavior of electrons within the atom? And many other phenomena of like nature which spring to the mind? Especially in biology and psychology, where *life* is involved, this uncertainty is multiplied a thousand-fold. Who can predict what a rat will do first when introduced into a maze? Or the differing reactions of five perfect strangers to the stimulus word “water”? Or whether or not they “like” turnips or strawberries, and whether these foods do or do not “agree” with them? I think it was Bergson who declared that we can predict an eclipse a thousand-and-one-years from now, but that no one can predict what will happen when you pull a pug-dog’s tail! When the element of life is introduced, this relative uncertainty is always present; and, inasmuch as, in the study of mediumistic cases, we are necessarily dealing with a living human being—and, worse still, a human mind—the same condition must prevail. Nevertheless, one’s observations can be conducted sci-

entifically, just as they are in any biological or psychological experimentation.

If, however, by "proved" is meant the repeated observation of a certain phenomenon, or a series of phenomena, under seemingly excellent conditions of control, these observations being made by men of science recognized for their sanity and caution in other fields of research, then it may be contended that many psychic phenomena have repeatedly been "proved," since just this sort of observation and even experimental technique has been employed time and again, in the checking and re-checking of mediumistic cases. In the opinion of many of us, certain types of psychic phenomena are just as well established as any others in the fields of biology and psychology, and most certainly constitute an integral part of the order of Nature.

But, whether they be actually accepted or not, it can hardly be questioned that their *investigation* is demanded—in view of the testimony advanced by men of science, and intelligent laymen, that they do exist. As Professor Henry Sidgwick said, in his very first Presidential address before the S.P.R., in 1882:

"... We are all agreed that the present state of things is a scandal to the enlightened age in which we live. That the dispute as to the reality of these marvellous phenomena—of which it is quite impossible to exaggerate the scientific importance, if only a tenth part of what has been alleged by generally credible witnesses could be shown to be true—I say it is a scandal that the dispute as to the reality of these phenomena should still be

going on, that so many competent witnesses should have declared their belief in them, that so many others should be profoundly interested in having the question determined, and yet that the educated world, as a body, should still be simply in the attitude of incredulity."

It was in an attempt to rectify this condition and dispose of this "scandal" that the Society for Psychical Research was organized. Throughout history, and in every country of the world, psychic phenomena had been reported, but no systematic and organized attempt had been made to study them scientifically. This the Society attempted to do, and the various similar societies and organizations which have since sprung up in various countries, have had similar aims—and have proceeded, for the most part, along similar lines. A mass of evidence has been accumulated in consequence—the official publications of the English and American Societies alone totaling more than a hundred bulky and closely printed volumes. Anyone setting himself up as a critic of the evidence must necessarily have read through this material carefully and in detail, for otherwise he would be in no position to know what has been accomplished in this field, and hence to judge the results.

It is indeed incredible, but nevertheless true, that this mass of material—much of it of a high order—should seemingly have made almost no impression upon the academic world, as a whole, or upon our institutions of learning. Even in the cases of Universities where money has been left, in the form of bequests, for the express

purpose of this investigation, the money has been diverted into other channels, and nothing more has ever been heard of it. This is due, I believe, to several factors:

(1) Universities in America are controlled by an orthodox Board of Directors who, for reasons of "policy," will have nothing to do with such an unpopular subject. (2) Religious prejudice, especially by Roman Catholics, who object to Spiritualism *as a religion*—quite aside from the fact that psychical research, as such, has nothing to do with any religion, but consists merely in the scientific and impartial investigation of certain alleged *facts*. (3) Scientific prejudice, based upon the supposed "impossibility" of such phenomena, and the difficulty of incorporating them into the accepted theories held in physics, physiology, psychology, etc. This last is a purely *a priori* objection, necessitated by the prevailing view as to the mind-body relationship.

It need hardly be pointed out that the first two of these objections should find no place in any purely scientific problem; the first is merely contemptible, while the second implies that lack of intellectual freedom for which science has been fighting for three hundred years. As to the "scientific" objections to these phenomena, it need surely only be pointed out that they should have no weight whatever provided the alleged phenomena prove to be really existent, i.e., actual *facts*. Merely because we cannot explain certain manifestations, and dovetail them into the scheme of existing

science, is surely no reason for their *a priori* rejection; and this would immediately be agreed to—in the case of any phenomena other than psychic! It merely becomes a question, therefore, as to whether these phenomena do or do not exist; and in this connection I cannot do better, perhaps, than to quote the words of Sir William Barrett, who (*On the Threshold of the Unseen*, p. 103) says:

“... The popular view that all mediums are impostors and all the manifestations associated with them are due to fraud, is a convenient explanation for those who will not take the trouble to enquire. But I have never yet met with *anyone* who has seriously studied the evidence, or engaged in prolonged investigation of this subject, who holds that view, however strongly he may have held it beforehand.”

Inasmuch as it has so often been contended, by those ignorant of the facts, that the majority of psychical researchers are emotionally interested in proving survival—usually for some personal motive and that they possess a strong “will to believe” the spiritualistic theory, a brief account should perhaps be given of the manner of my own entry into this peculiar field of activity, and my subsequent reactions and attitude toward it—even if by so doing a certain amount of autobiographical material must inevitably be introduced. In view of the circumstances, however, I trust that this will be excused, inasmuch as it is rendered inevitable by the very nature of the case, and the necessity of furnishing the psychological data essential for estimating my own mental

background, qualifications, motives and reactions. With this necessary apology, therefore, I proceed to give these data as briefly as possible.

All my life, as long as I can remember, I have been interested in conjuring and magic. My father had likewise been interested for some years before my birth, and had spent ten years in India. When I was a boy he gave me a quantity of magical apparatus, together with several books dealing with the subject. One or two of these dealt with fraudulent spiritualistic tricks, so that I might say that I have really been indirectly in touch with the subject as long as I can remember. However, at the age of eighteen, I became seriously interested, as the result of reading *The Revelations of a Spirit Medium*, Robinson's *Spirit Slate Writing*, and other books of a like nature. The result was that I delved deeply into the fraudulent aspect of the subject, and for many months thought that anyone who believed in this "stuff" simply did not know how the tricks were done, and that I was particularly clever and did. Many magicians today hold the same view!

Then, I happened to pick up a book by Miss X.—*Essays in Psychological Research*. Herein were narrated a number of striking instances which had occurred, as personal experiences of the author. Nevertheless they were told in a calm, objective tone, by one who did not in any way stress the spiritualistic viewpoint, but on the contrary seemed rather to avoid it. At all events, the

book made a deep impression upon me at the time. I thought to myself, "If anyone seemingly as sane and sensible as this can vouch for the genuineness of psychic phenomena, and state that she herself has experienced them, there may be something in the subject after all. I shall join the Society for Psychical Research, read, experiment and see!" I accordingly joined that Society when I was nineteen, plunged into the *Proceedings* and *Journals*, and metaphorically did not remove my nose from them for six months. I read every available book upon the subject I could lay my hands on—*pro* and *con*—attended séances, experimented with amateur mediums; and in short began that intensive investigation of the subject which has continued without intermission ever since—a period of more than forty-eight years.

Looking back on this period of my life, I cannot but be struck by its apparent incongruities, as well as by the promiscuous collection of books read by me at the time—some of them, one might think, of no applicable value, but every one of them (I believe) serving a useful purpose in the foundation of the edifice of psychic knowledge which I was attempting to build. Here was I, living for weeks at a time on five and ten cents a day, in order that I might have free time to spend all day and all night in the library,¹ reading such books as *Chaldean Magic*, *Isis Unveiled*, *The Gypsies*, *Rope Ties* and

¹ Minneapolis, Minn.—by strange fatality remarkably well stocked with psychic and occult books, at that time (1899).

Knots, Swedenborg's Arcana Cœlestia, The History of Imposture and Credulity, Spirit Teachings, Juggling Secrets, How to Take Good Photographs, The Dynamics of Magnetism, Psychotherapy, How to Train Animals, Life and Death, and a thousand-and-one seemingly unrelated topics—every one of which, however, proved of interest and value, as subsequent history showed.

My intensive reading of that period forced me to several tentative conclusions. These were: (a) The earnestness, sincerity, candor and caution of the S.P.R. workers; (b) The importance of the investigation, from any standpoint whatsoever; (c) the virtual certitude of telepathy, and one or two related phenomena, and (d) the very unsettled and unconvincing state of spiritualistic phenomena, taken as a whole.

My somewhat negative reaction to Spiritualism and spiritistic manifestations was, I think, quite justified and quite natural, in view of my early training and my initiation into this subject. A number of the mediums I investigated during that time were palpably fraudulent, while the credulity of many of the devout followers disgusted me. Even an amateur training in science makes one critical, and the trend of science at that time was, as we know, strongly mechanistic.

Again, the character of one's early religious training doubtless plays an important part—probably largely subconscious—in one's viewpoint and degree of receptiveness toward the idea of survival and the general

doctrine of "immortality." The majority of persons of the last generation probably had had a more or less orthodox training in traditional Christian dogma. They therefore tended to accept, as a matter of course, the general idea of the soul and its survival; and if, in later life, they felt compelled to give this up, it was at the cost of much inner suffering—necessitating emotional turmoil and inner wrenches of no mean order. Any objection such individuals might have to the doctrine of Spiritualism probably rested, for the most part, on Biblical utterances and religious bigotry.

In my own case, I am thankful to say, such inner turmoils had never been necessitated. Both my parents were (I believe) Agnostics, and at all events no dogmatic Christianity had ever been "forced down my throat," during my early years. My father had spent some ten years in India (in the service of the British Admiralty), and both he and my mother were, I am inclined to think, more Buddhistic than anything else. At all events, they took the stand that, just because I happened to be born in a "Christian" country, I need not necessarily be a Christian when I grew up. I might become a Buddhist, or a Confucian, or a Mohammedan, or anything else for that matter. The result was that I grew up quite detached from any religion, seeing some good and much bad in all of them; more or less a rationalist at heart, with little confidence in the reality of any spiritual world. Moreover, perhaps on that account, I did not feel, and have

never felt, that deep longing for personal survival which so many experience. To me it has always been merely a question of *evidence*, whether survival be a fact or not, and I personally regard it from what I believe to be an entirely detached and impersonal viewpoint—much as I should regard any problem in physics or chemistry.

It is merely a question of whether the facts *prove* survival or whether they do not. This being so, I have perhaps an advantage over certain psychic investigators, whose subconscious bent inclines them either in one direction or the other.

As a result of my investigations, however, I have become quite convinced that psychic phenomena are for the most part *real*—that is, they are genuinely supernormal in character—and that there is a superphysical world of some sort in which we are all immersed, and of which we constitute a part. And this conviction is, I believe, shared by all those who have investigated this subject at first hand, and for a considerable period of time.

Our critics are, for the most part, men who have read little or nothing upon the subject, and who have not attended a single séance with a reputable medium. In this subject, one must have infinite patience. It is useless to attend a trumpery séance or two, and conclude that the whole thing is not worth while. Personally, I sat with mediums producing “physical phenomena” for eight years before seeing what I considered to be the first

genuine case. I cite this merely to show the amount of perseverance necessary; however, that first genuine case was worth all the years of waiting and fruitless experimenting—just as a chemist may work a life-time before discovering some correct formula. No one would contend, in his case, that the years of work had been “wasted,” or that he was a “fool” for devoting so much time to fruitless toil. I believe it is the same here; and that this field also yields scientific results of enormous importance, once they have been unearthed and discovered.

Many of our most eminent scientists have devoted a considerable part of their time to the investigation of these phenomena, and the long list of ex-presidents of the parent Society is an imposing one. Among these we may mention: Prof. Henry Sidgwick, Prof. Balfour Stewart, The Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour, Prof. William James, Sir William Crookes, Sir William Barrett, Prof. Charles Richet, Mr. Andrew Lang, Prof. Henri Bergson, Prof. F. C. S. Schiller, Prof. Gilbert Murray, Dr. L. P. Jacks, Prof. William McDougall, Lord Rayleigh, M. Camille Flammarion, Prof. Hans Driesch, Dr. Walter F. Prince, Bishop Boyd Carpenter, Sir Oliver Lodge, and many others known for their work in this special field.

It is, I think, safe to say that all these men were quite convinced of the actuality of genuine psychic phenomena—though there are naturally quite differing opinions as to the ultimate *interpretations* of these phenomena.

That, however, is a matter of secondary importance. Membership in the Society does not imply any particular attitude toward the facts, and widely differing opinions are often expressed concerning them. This is also true of our American Psychical Institute, the first one of its "Declaration of Principles" reading: "Membership in the A.P.I. shall not be held to indicate any particular belief in or interpretation of psychical phenomena." The standard of evidence maintained by most Societies is exceptionally high, and is invariably subjected to the fullest analysis and criticism—largely from members.

It has frequently been emphasized that there are, broadly speaking, two main classes or divisions of psychic phenomena: the mental and the physical. These designations are doubtless largely self-explanatory. There is, however, a certain amount of overlapping of the two types, since many physical phenomena seem to be directed by some intelligence (hence involving a "mind" of some sort) and many of the mental manifestations are frequently accompanied by physical phenomena, especially manifestations occurring at the moment of death.¹ Of the mental occurrences I shall speak in some detail presently. Of the physical, it is generally held that these do not, in themselves, constitute valid evidence for survival. Dr. Hyslop was especially in-

¹ Raps, opening and closing of windows, stopping of clocks, swinging of pictures, etc.

sistent upon this point—which was perhaps natural for a psychologist! These phenomena, when genuine, certainly present many puzzling and fascinating problems from the points-of-view of physics and biology, and in fact, as we know, there is a whole “school” which now contends that they represent phenomena constituting the basis of a new branch of science—supernormal biology. They are not explicable by any ordinary biological theories; nevertheless they are genuine, and are undoubtedly connected with the living organism of the medium in some mysterious manner. A classic example of this, of course, is to found in Dr. Osty’s experiments with Rudi Schneider, where it was found that the vibration-rate of the invisible “substance” issuing from the medium’s body was always exactly twice the breathing rate of the medium—which itself was accelerated to a phenomenally high speed (300 or more to the minute, on occasion). Here, then, we have a definite connection with the functional activities of the medium’s body—a fact worthy of prolonged laboratory investigation—which nevertheless does not appear to be definitely spiritualistic in nature, as commonly understood.

At the same time, as Dr. Osty intimates, in his *Supernormal Aspects of Energy and Matter*, pp. 38-39:

“Rudi Schneider . . . is, in the normal use of his mind, just a plain individual. A motor mechanic by trade and of little education, he is incapable of understanding any problem of physics, of chemistry or of biology. In a group of scientists he would fail to understand what was being said about contemporary

knowledge. But if he is asked to perform a paranormal action, such as the displacement of an object at a distance and without contact, it is enough for him momentarily to suspend his conscious activity, for him to put himself into a special physiological state, called a trance, which endows him with exceptional powers over matter. Then this ignorant being behaves as if he knew the intimate and primordial resources of life and processes of creation. This innate science is so inexplicable that the vast majority of men of science refuse even to listen to it. . . .

“Like the paranormal knowledge of reality in time and in space, the paranormal knowledge of the organising processes of life reveals that, behind the use of the mind in feeling, in thinking and in acting on matter, there is another intelligent plane of being, usually not manifest, which very probably represents the fundamental reality of ourselves and forms part of a plane of life quite different from that in which we exercise our ordinary intelligence.”

These facts are assuredly, on any theory, of profound significance. They show us, on the other hand, that it is quite possible to conduct laboratory experiments in the realm of the supernormal,¹ and also that, behind the energy responsible for the physical manifestations themselves, there is often a directive activity, seemingly intelligent in character, which directs and controls the phenomenal happenings observed. This again is a fact of enormous suggestiveness.

It has frequently been pointed out that a living human organism is seemingly necessary in order to insure the production of genuine physical phenomena. Many investigators, on the other hand, have endeavored to construct pieces of apparatus which would render direct

¹As we have shown in our experiments in the American Psychical Institute, wherein many investigations of this character have been conducted, with modern instruments of precision.

“communication” possible, without the intervention of any living person. Thus far, such experiments have proved negative—which fact might be attributed to a variety of causes! However, if the reality of some “spiritual world” be granted, the theoretical possibility of such a device must always be acknowledged. Could we but find *an energy common to the two worlds*, this might be the solution of the problem; and it is possible that such laboratory methods may yet be devised. However, this is a question which only the science of the future can decide!

It is a most interesting and significant fact that a large percentage of all psychic phenomena cluster around death, in one form or another. It is now a matter of common knowledge that apparitions of the dying person are far more frequent than can be accounted for by chance—thus proving some causal connection.¹ Similarly other mental and physical manifestations hinge upon, and center about, this crucial point; while “visions of the dying” and similar phenomena have frequently been recorded.² Certainly a number of recorded happenings occur *as if* they were due to the influence of the dying person, directly or indirectly. The significance of this fact is obvious, on one theory, but certainly difficult to account for on any purely “naturalistic” hypothesis.

If death represents merely the extinction of the mind

¹ The concluding words of the famous “Census of Hallucinations” were: “Between deaths and apparitions of the dying person a connection exists which is not due to chance alone. This we hold as a proved fact. . . .”

² See, e.g., Sir William Barrett’s little book *Death-Bed Visions*.

of man, there is of course no reason for this clustering of psychic experiences about that moment—perhaps *less* reason than at any time—since, if consciousness is being extinguished, it must surely possess far *less* dynamic power than at any previous period of its existence. If, however, it is being *released*, and freed from the limitations of the body, then there is some understandable reason for the frequency of such manifestations—which careful statistical inquiries have shown to exist.

Once again, we are confronted—as always—by the mind-body problem, and its theoretical interpretation. We all remember that, many years ago, Professor William James, in his *Human Immortality*, suggested that such a connection must indeed exist, but that it is conceivable that the human brain might be a thought-transmitting machine, rather than a thought creating machine, and formulated his theory of “transmission” of consciousness. This is an alternate theory, which may or may not be true; it explains the facts as well as the “production” theory does; but on the other hand, it is difficult if not impossible to *prove* it. If, however, there are certain phenomena (psychic) which are readily explicable on one theory and not on the other, then it is obvious that the theory which is capable of including and explaining all the facts is preferable, and is, indeed, the one we seem logically driven to accept. Hence, we must not seek to judge the *a priori* possibility of psychic phenomena by reason of some particular theory as to the

mind-body relationship which we may hold; on the contrary, the theory of the relationship in question must be determined by the existence of certain *facts*. Inasmuch as psychical research is necessarily an *inductive* problem, to a great extent, this is only logical and what we should expect.

Of one fact, at least, psychical research has forcibly reminded us, and that is the *reality of the invisible*. This fact should have been already emphasized, one would think, by psychology itself, and even by the modern discoveries in physics; but the fact itself, and its implications, are certainly not sufficiently realized. Skeptics are still inclined to think, or at least to *act*, as though the material world were the only real one—despite the fact that all philosophical thought is opposed to this view, and that all physical objects and phenomena are “appearances” only, and hence necessarily *unreal*, in the last analysis. The mere fact that the human personality is an invisible entity is demonstrated to us every day, so to say *ad oculos*. In looking at, and talking to, another person, we see his skin, clothing and exterior only; but the “person” to whom we are talking remains invisible to us, and must necessarily do so throughout life.

This being the case, it is assuredly simply a question of fact as to whether this invisible entity possesses powers and potencies, on the one hand, which are rarely developed, and whether it is capable of withstanding the shock and wrench of death, on the other. After all, inas-

much as the personality is necessarily invisible, it is merely a question of *fact* as to whether or no this is the case; and there is a considerable body of respectable evidence, as we know, tending to favor this view.

The mere concept of human survival of bodily death, as a matter of fact, narrows itself down to the question of whether there is any concrete evidence that the stream of consciousness once known to us—and which we now know exists—is capable of continuing that existence in the absence of a physical brain. Again we return to the same old problem, it will be noticed—which we psychical researchers feel can be settled only by *facts*.

The question has frequently been raised: Has anything of actual importance ever really been discovered by psychic investigators during these years of laborious toil? Have they not in fact run up a cul-de-sac, with nothing at the end? Are they not butting their heads against a stone wall, under a mistaken belief, and all to no purpose? I think that a brief summary of the main results which have been achieved in this field, during the past sixty-five years—in the face of opposition, ridicule and many handicaps—will at least serve to dispel that illusion.

In the first place, and at its lowest level, so to speak, much has been done in the way of exposing fraudulent mediums, unmasking trickery and disclosing their methods. Most of this has been done by psychical researchers themselves—as elsewhere emphasized—and

much valuable material has been collected by way of disclosing the possibilities of mal-observation, etc., from a practical standpoint.

Then, the genuineness of certain psychic phenomena has, in our estimation, been thoroughly established. It matters not, for our present purposes, what these are, nor which are still debatable. If one genuine telepathic message, or one genuine telekinetic phenomenon, has really been shown to exist, then the whole of psychical research will have been validated, inasmuch as this fact is not as yet recognized by any of the official sciences.

During the early years of the Society's work, many valuable investigations were conducted in hypnotism, and Gurney's early researches in the psychology of the hypnotic trance are still classic. If hypnotism has figured but little, of late, in the Society's publications, this has been largely due to the fact that it is now more or less accepted as a "natural" phenomenon, by medical men and psychologists generally, and utilized by them for therapeutic purposes. But it must never be forgotten that much of the pioneer work was done by psychical researchers.

Again, many valuable cases of multiple personality have been published by the Society, and a great deal of careful study has been devoted to such cases by individuals sympathetic to our work. (Cf. The Doris case, Flournoy's case of Mlle. Smith, etc.)

Much of the early, exploratory work on the sub-

conscious mind was undertaken by psychic investigators—Myers' classical papers on the "Subliminal Consciousness" being widely known. In them, also, automatic writing and crystal gazing received their first sympathetic and critical handling, while the synthesis of psychic phenomena attempted by Myers is of great ingenuity and utility.

Genius, sleep, dreams, psychic healing, hysteria, and many other phenomena have all had considerable light thrown upon them by these pioneer workers. Glossolalia (speaking with tongues) and Xenoglossy (writing in various languages) were also subjected to critical discussion and analysis. The psychology of the trance received lengthy treatment, while various physical phenomena were cautiously observed and reported, and, of late years, studied in properly equipped laboratories, by means of suitable instruments of precision (infra-red rays, the galvanometer, electrical controls, etc.).

The definite establishment of telepathy, however, must rank as one of the greatest achievements of psychic science. This was proved, on the one hand, by lengthy and laborious experimentation, and, on the other hand, by the collection and analysis of cases of apparitions, etc., coinciding with death. The statistical treatment of this material (in *Phantasms of the Living*, "The Census of Hallucinations," etc.) definitely established the causal connection between deaths and apparitions of the dying person with a frequency greater than chance could

account for; while the theory put forward to account for such cases represented the one necessitating the least strain upon accepted scientific theory.

In addition to all this, definite proof has been obtained, in the opinion of many, of the existence of clairvoyance, premonitions, haunted houses, and many other more startling phenomena, including even the reality of "communication" with those who have "gone before." Much has been discovered regarding the mechanism or *modus operandi* of many of these manifestations; definite connections and inter-relationships have been found to exist between modern psychic phenomena, on the one hand, and other scientific facts, on the other; while considerable light has been thrown upon the primitive beliefs and practices of savage peoples. A vast literature has grown up, much of this of a very high caliber, while various international meetings or "Congresses" have been held.

It can hardly be contended, therefore, that psychical research has not justified its existence, or that important facts of great scientific value and interest have not been unearthed. Even this cursory and ineffectual summary has shown us that such is not the case, but that, on the contrary, many facts of profound significance have been disclosed.

There is a tendency, nowadays, to explain many psychic phenomena by means of telepathy; and indeed, in the public mind, this tentative explanation is assumed

more or less as a matter of course. We often hear the expression, "Oh, well, that is merely mind-reading!" It is not of course realized that telepathy, even if true, is a vastly important and inexplicable phenomenon! It is quite out of keeping with the usual, mechanistic theory of mind, which regards consciousness as a function of the brain. The analogy of "brain waves" to radio and other ether-waves is of course tempting, and it is probable that the majority of people accept this explanation as the true one as a matter of course. But it has frequently been pointed out that this explanation, when pressed to its logical conclusion, is by no means so simple as might at first sight be supposed! In the first place, such brain-waves have not been shown to exist; instrumental tests have mainly proved negative.¹ Further, all physical radiant energies have been shown to follow the law of inverse squares, so that (on theory) a "telepathic message" should be far "weaker" at a distance of a hundred miles than at ten yards; but experimental evidence does not seem to confirm this view.

Various psychologists have spoken of "traveling in the unconscious," in connection with telepathic phenomena. This is all very well, but the problem is: What

¹ I say "mainly" because Professor Cazzamali's investigations have given us pause. He has demonstrated that radiations of some sort seemingly are radiated from the human brain, under the stress of emotion, and have been registered both instrumentally and upon photographic plates. It is hardly necessary to state that these experiments, even if valid, have thrown no light upon the "meaning" of thought, or on the actual mechanism involved. However, his experimental work is still *sub judice*, and as such I must be content to leave it for the time being.

travels? And how? What may we conceive as actually taking place at such times? Of course any such view is totally opposed to the ordinary mechanistic theory, which regards the mind as a function of the brain. For, on this view, it would be as impossible for the Unconscious to "travel" as it would be for (say) the bile to "travel" in space in the absence of the liver! It may be thought that I am harping unduly on this aspect of the problem, but I cannot too strongly emphasize the fact that this is, after all, the *crux* of the whole problem in the minds of psychologists and psychiatrists, and the basic reason for their *a priori* rejection of psychic phenomena. If it could once be shown that the Unconscious "travels" in space, this would at once constitute a tremendously powerful lever for the acceptance of the idea that mind can function in the absence of a living brain, and exert influence at a distance, and hence that it might conceivably continue such activity *post mortem* in the absence of a physical brain.

Again, it should be emphasized that, for the generation and transmission of radio waves which can travel over considerable distances, a tremendously bulky and powerful station is necessary, actuated by electrical power of great intensity. Considered anatomically, there are no indications that any cells or areas of the brain—or the brain as a whole—possesses this potency, or could generate the needed power, or that any area of it is suited for the sending or receiving of telepathic mes-

sages. For these and other reasons, therefore, many psychic investigators have altogether abandoned the idea that telepathy can be physical in its operation, or in any way analogous to radio waves. They have been driven to believe that this supernormal faculty represents the power of mind to manifest directly to mind, in some mysterious manner, through the intermediary of some mental or metetherial world.

There is yet another difficulty presented by any physical theory of telepathy, and that is the seeming transmission of the *meaning* of thought. All physical energies that we know are "blind" in the sense that they are not self-directional or purposeful. But, in telepathic transmission, the content or meaning of thought is the very essence of what is transmitted. Dr. William McDougall, in his *Body and Mind*, has emphasized the difficulty experienced by ordinary psychology in conceiving any physiological correlate (in the brain) for the "meaning" of thought, and doubts whether such actually exists. One great difficulty presented by any purely physical theory of telepathy, therefore, consists in this—the seeming impossibility of accounting for the transmission from mind to mind, of the content or meaning of the idea or thought conveyed.

But if we encounter these difficulties in attempting to explain telepathy, how much greater are the difficulties in explaining clairvoyance! For here no distant living mind is involved, but objects or events in the physical

world are seemingly perceived, as though the "seer" were actually "there" in person. Dr. J. B. Rhine's experiments, in themselves, have amply demonstrated that clairvoyance exists (*Extrasensory Perception*) and, this being so, some explanation must be forthcoming, or at least attempted, by official science. Certainly no mechanistic theory can account for the facts. No theory of "energy radiation" can account for the accurate reading of a shuffled pack of cards, turned face downwards, at a distance of 250 miles! Yet clairvoyance certainly exists, and represents one of the most baffling of all psychic phenomena.

This difficulty is illustrated in cases of e.g., "traveling clairvoyance," observed so often by the early "mesmerists." The subject in trance apparently sees and describes distant scenes, or events actually transpiring at the time, which on subsequent verification are found to be correct. If the subject were completely unconscious, or in a state of coma, one might be tempted to postulate some sort of "astral projection" to the scene visited; but when the subject is at least partially conscious, actually talking and describing what he sees, and is obviously "there," in the sense that his psychic self is describing what is being perceived, the difficulty of accounting for his psychic activity in two places at the same time is obviously greatly enhanced! Nevertheless the facts require *some* explanation, and the only thing that can be said about them at present is that they cannot be ex-

plained by orthodox psychology—and perhaps, because of this, psychology has thus far decided to deny and ignore them. However this ostrich philosophy cannot last forever, and the problem presented by these puzzling phenomena must one day be fairly met and considered.

Still more baffling are cases of so-called premonitions, in which future events are apparently in some way envisioned. Our ordinary conception of time does not permit us to believe that the future, which is as yet “non-existent,” can be in any way foretold. Yet there are many striking and well-evidenced cases on record, in which this has seemingly been accomplished. Such premonitory flashes are usually spontaneous, and can very rarely be experimentally induced. Various theories have been advanced, in attempts to explain premonitions of the kind—all the way from physical analogies to the most abstruse metaphysical speculations, necessitating a more or less complete reconstruction of our conception of time. One of the latest and most ingenious of these, doubtless, is that presented by Mr. F. H. Saltmarsh, in *Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. XLII, pp. 49-103. It would take too long even to summarize his views here, but those who may be interested in this question of premonitions, and the possible bearing of these phenomena on the problem of free will *v.* determinism would be edified by a careful perusal of his paper.

I have already touched upon the question of apparitions.

tions coinciding with death, but a few words may perhaps be added in this place on the difficult subject of "haunted houses." That such things as haunted houses exist I have not the slightest doubt; but also it is true that I probably mean something entirely different by a "haunted house" than is conveyed by the usual, popular conception. If one means a house in which semi-material specters stalk about, clanking chains, opening doors, appearing on anniversaries and strangling the inhabitants of the house who have the temerity to spend a night therein, then I do not believe in *such* occurrences! But if one merely contends that there are certain localities in which the senses and sensibilities of those living therein are influenced and affected in some strange manner, then I think there is considerable evidence tending to show that such houses actually exist.

The theory has been advanced that rooms and houses somehow may be impregnated by some subtle physical emanation, by the thoughts and emotions of those living and dying within them—much as some objects are thought to be charged-up by contact with an individual, in cases of "psychometry." It is possible that something of the sort is the case; only modern thought seems to veer rather away from the idea that psychometry is in fact due to any such cause, but is due rather to some purely mental or psychic factor. A closer analogy, perhaps, might be found in the "cabinet" of a physical medium, which seems to become sur-charged with a psy-

chic energy, from which phenomena doubtless radiate during the course of a séance. I myself have seen this repeatedly operative in the case of Eusapia Palladino. That there is something to be said in favor of this view I am strongly inclined to believe.

Again, it has been suggested that telepathy from the dead may be a possible explanation: that, just as thought-transference exists between living minds, so likewise does it exist between minds now in the flesh and those existing in some post-mortem state. On this view, phantom forms seen in haunted houses would represent the thoughts, or perhaps dreams, of those who had once lived in the house in question, and who were, perhaps subconsciously, living over their experiences and lives in such houses—thus influencing the minds and sensibilities of those at present dwelling within them. Of course such a view of the facts necessarily presupposes the active existence of discarnate entities, which certain minds cannot accept. For those who can, this view of the facts would serve to explain many of the recorded phenomena—perhaps in conjunction with the theory outlined above and others (such as thought-forms, telepathy from the living, etc.) coupled with it. For those who cannot accept this view, the problem of haunted houses yet remains, and certainly cannot be met or disposed of by any view which merely consists in denying their existence, or attempting to “explain them away” on any purely “naturalistic” lines.

One further point in this connection may prove of interest, and this is the fact that only certain individuals seem to be "impressed" by whatever influences there may be actually existent in so-called haunted houses. Some persons seem to be more or less "impervious" to such influences; others—equally skeptical and hard headed—are strongly affected. Naturally psychic individuals are of course keenly influenced—from which it might perhaps be deduced that individuals of the latter class are, quite unknown to themselves, more or less sensitive and hence open to such impressions. In short, in haunted house phenomena, two factors seem to be at work: the house itself and the dweller within it: and both are contributing factors.

Nevertheless, it is quite remarkable how many persons of the utmost sanity and hard-headedness have had one or more psychic experiences in their lives—perhaps only *once*, but that once coincides with the death or illness of some friend or relative! It is highly probable that everyone has certain latent psychic powers, far more pronounced in some than in others, which in certain instances have been cultivated by persistent self-development. The question often has been raised: Are all persons potentially psychic, or is it all a matter of development? The answer to this doubtless is that both factors play a part. All individuals are *more or less* artistic—to use an analogy. In some cases a relatively small amount of training will develop a real genius; in

others prolonged application will only develop a most mediocre artist. So, in those cases which have strong innate psychic tendencies, a brief course of development will graduate them into full-fledged mediums, while in the cases of those who have but a small degree of psychic power, the most painstaking course of development will serve only to develop a few faint flashes of genuine mediumistic talent.

It is highly probable that mediumship is to some extent hereditary, and it has been suggested that one of the reasons for the relative scarcity of good mediums is that those in the middle ages who, perhaps unwillingly, displayed any phenomena of the kind were immediately tortured and burned as witches—and their descendants exterminated in consequence. Be that as it may, the fact remains that genius in all lines is relatively rare, and a good medium may be characterized as a “psychic genius.” Hence the great mediums in each generation are hard to find—just as great painters or musicians or poets are few and far between.

And this automatically answers another objection, which is that, inasmuch as there is undoubtedly so much subconsciously fabricated material given through automatic writing, trance mediumship, etc., is it not highly probable that *all* of it is of this origin—or probably so—if only we take the trouble to dig deeply enough in order to discover it? This is in fact the attitude taken by most psychologists (and psychiatrists) and up to a certain

point is a perfectly logical and valid objection. But, because this is true, it does not in the least prove that there may not be exceptional cases in which supernormal material is not interblended with this subconscious pabulum, or that it may not at times largely replace it. Such, in fact, appears to be the case. In even the cases of really good mediums we find instances of the constant intrusion of provably subconscious material, in addition to the obvious supernormal messages obtained through the medium. . . . It would be folly to close the mind to such possibilities. Because a second-hand art dealer sees and rejects ten thousand imitations of "old masters," there is no reason why he should not by good fortune encounter one genuine painting, in the course of his travels. Similarly, the subconscious (or conscious—fraudulent) imitation of mediumship does not in the least prove that there may not be such a thing as genuine psychic power. It is the task of the experimenter to discover this; and, once discovered, to study it with all the care and caution possible, and by every means available to modern science.

This brings us to a very interesting and important question, viz., the personality of the investigator. It is true that, in this subject especially, there are individuals whose reports inspire confidence, and in whose observations and conclusions one has implicit faith, while in the cases of other investigators this is not at all the case. It is equally true that every Tom, Dick and Harry seems

to think that his opinion is entitled to consideration, on this question, no matter how little he may have studied it, or how little he may know about it! This is strange, since no one would think of setting up his opinion, in this manner, against that of experts, in any other branch of science. This is usually because he thinks that the subject is "all bosh," and that there are no such things as genuine psychic phenomena at all. One cannot but recall Richet's words, in this connection: "The man who today asserts that there are no psychic phenomena is not prejudiced, he is merely ignorant."

I have elsewhere¹ epitomized what I consider to be the essentials of a competent psychic investigator, and I may perhaps quote what I then said:

"A specialized training is necessary for this work; our ideal investigator must have a thorough knowledge of the literature of the subject; he must have a good grounding in normal and abnormal psychology; in physics, chemistry, biology, photography, and some laboratory experience; he must be a keen observer, a good judge of human nature and its motives; he must be well trained in magic and sleight-of-hand; he must be shrewd, quick of thought and action, ever on the alert, patient, resourceful, open-minded, tolerant, rapid in his observations and deductions, sympathetic, and have a sense of humor! He must be free from superstition, and at the same time unswayed by bigotry—theological or scientific. In short, our ideal investigator is hard to find, and it is probable that such a man is born rather than made. . . ."

Yet certain psychic investigators have fulfilled quite well these requirements!

¹ *The Story of Psychic Science*, p. 24.

I cannot refrain from quoting, in this connection, the words of William James who, in speaking of certain investigators, wrote:

“When I hear good people say that dabbling in such phenomena reduces us to a sort of jelly, disintegrates the whole critical faculties. . . . I console myself by thinking of my friends Frederic Myers and Richard Hodgson. These men lived exclusively for psychical research, and it converted both of them to Spiritualism. . . . Hodgson would have been a man among men anywhere. Myers’ character also grew stronger in every particular. . . . When a man’s pursuit gradually makes his face shine and grow handsome you may be sure that it is a worthy one. Both Hodgson and Myers kept growing ever handsomer and stronger-looking. . . .” (*Memories and Studies*, pp. 194-95).

The supposed “dangers” connected with psychic investigation have undoubtedly been vastly overrated. It is true that there are certain potential dangers for experimenters who are mentally or nervously ill-balanced, and such individuals had best leave the subject severely alone. This would apply also to those who are over-emotional or unduly credulous. But here the dangers surely lie in the individuals themselves rather than in the subject-matter investigated. Scores of persons have become unbalanced even when dealing with physics (perpetual motion, etc.) and thousands have become insane over religion. Statistical investigations have shown that the proportion of insane Spiritualists is, as a matter-of-fact, relatively small. If a researcher keeps his head, his common sense, his judgment and his humor, there is no more reason whatever why he should be influenced

detrimentally by these investigations than by any others, nor why his acumen, his keenness of observation and his penetration of perception should not be maintained at the same high level.

Anyone reading the official publications of the Society for Psychical Research must recognize, I believe, that these high standards have for the most part been adequately maintained. It was felt from the very beginning that, while the subject-matter of these researches might be new, the method pursued might yet be scientific. For centuries such sporadic manifestations had been reported, but it was only in 1882 that a group of men founded the parent Society, determined to ascertain, if possible, what truth there might be in these accounts. Myers has told us, in almost poetic words, how this came about. He says:

“In a star-light walk which I shall never forget, I asked him (Professor Henry Sidgwick) almost with trembling, whether he thought that when Tradition, Intuition, Metaphysics, had failed to solve the Riddle of the Universe, there was still a chance that from any actual observable phenomena—ghosts, spirits, whatsoever there might be—some valid knowledge might yet be drawn as to a world unseen. Already, it seemed, he had thought that this was possible; steadily, though in no sanguine fashion, he indicated some last grounds for hope; and from that night onwards I resolved to pursue this quest, if it might be, at his side. . . .”

And, writing nearly twenty years later of his convictions, based on the work accomplished during that intervening period, Myers wrote:

"So confident, indeed, do I feel in this gradual but certain method of approach—in this open, unfrequented way—that even if it had thus far failed to lead us to any discovery, I should feel bound to pursue it still. But it has not failed. This persistent analysis of unexplored faculty has revealed to us already far more than I, for one, had ever dared to hope. I may surely say with no more than the licensed exaggeration of epigram, that our method has revealed to us a hidden world within us, and that this hidden world within us has revealed to us an invisible world without."

In the years which have ensued since the inauguration of the parent Society for Psychical Research, much important work has been done, many facts have been established and many conclusions arrived at. Some of these I have briefly referred to earlier in this volume. There are those, of course, who feel that the central and most important problem of all is that of human survival; and to this problem I propose to devote the remaining pages of this book. It is admittedly a most thorny and difficult road, beset with many pitfalls. To the convinced materialist, of course, there is no problem at all; the question has already been settled by science, and in the negative! To him, any discussion of a future life is a childish absurdity—pure superstition. To the convinced religionist, on the other hand, the question is likewise settled, but this time in the affirmative! A future life there most certainly is; but any form of "communication" is impossible. The Spiritualist holds that a future life is proved by the very facts of communication; while the psychical researcher merely attempts to ascertain and

verify what facts, if any, there may be in favor of survival, and to estimate their validity and significance.

May it be presupposed, in what follows, that I am writing for those who have not a closed mind either in one direction or in the other? Cecil Rhodes once said that he considered this question of a future life "an even bet"—a 50 per cent. gamble either way. There are those who would contend that it is a 90-10 gamble, or a 60-40, or some other percentage, either for or against. It is only to those who have a 100 per cent. closed mind, so to say, that the facts of psychical research would prove useless.

And let it be emphasized, just here, that the facts of psychical research, even if true, and the fact of human survival, even if proved, would by no means (as many seem to fear) necessarily drive us back to effete theological dogmas and the tyrannies of priestcraft. The doctrines of Spiritualism (as a religion) are totally opposed to this. When Upton Sinclair published his book *Mental Radio*, he was severely criticized by a certain section of the Freethought press as a renegade, a betrayer of the Cause—and many could not understand *why*. Yet the reason is, I think, perfectly obvious. Rationalism and Communistic Freethought are based upon the fundamental conception that "religion is the opiate of the people," that survival in any form is a base superstition, and that Materialism is the only true philosophy upon which such a system can flourish. But—as before emphasized—many psychic phenomena, genu-

inely supernormal in character, undoubtedly exist, which have nothing to do with "spirits," being manifestations of the unknown and hitherto unrecognized powers of the human psyche. And, in the second place, philosophical Spiritualism is far removed from traditional Theology, as even a cursory perusal of its teachings would indicate. As Alfred Russel Wallace, in his *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, said:

"The hypothesis of Spiritualism . . . is the only one given to the world that can at all commend itself to the modern philosophical mind. . . . The main doctrines of this religion are: That after death man's spirit survives in an ethereal body, gifted with new powers, but mentally and morally the same individual as when clothed in flesh. That he commences from that moment a course of apparently endless progression, which is rapid just in proportion as his mental and moral faculties are cultivated when on earth. That his comparative happiness or misery will depend entirely upon himself. . . . Neither punishments nor rewards are meted out by an external power, but each one's condition is the natural and inevitable sequence of his condition here. . . . Equally at variance with each other are the popular and spiritualistic doctrines as regards the Deity. Our modern religious teachers maintain that they know a great deal about God. They define minutely and critically his various attributes; they enter into his motives, his feelings and his opinions. . . . In the teachings of the "spirits" there is not a word of all this. They tell us that they commune with higher intelligences than themselves, but of God they really *know* no more than we do. They say that above these higher intelligences are others higher and higher in apparently endless gradation; but so far as they know no absolute knowledge of the Deity himself is claimed by any of them. . . ."

All this seems logical and rational enough. It accords

with our modern views of evolution, and with our sense of justice and right. Personally, I feel that, despite all the weaknesses; despite the fraud, credulity and superstition which have sometimes been connected with Spiritualism, it is nevertheless true that its moral and religious teachings are the most sane and rational in the world today, and have the added advantage of being based on a set of observable phenomena—which cannot be claimed for any other religion.

There need, therefore, be no fear on the part of even the most convinced Rationalist that the ultimate proof of Spiritualism would necessitate a reversion to the religious bigotry and intolerance of the middle ages, for it would have no such effect. With this “fear” removed from his mind, he may perhaps be more willing to consider and discuss the question of human survival purely as a scientific problem, and as a matter of *fact*—which is the manner in which the impartial psychical researcher considers it.

2

NOW, IN CONSIDERING THIS QUESTION OF SURVIVAL, THERE are certain arguments against it and certain arguments in its favor. Much might be said concerning all of these, but limitations of space necessitate a brief and perhaps dogmatic summing-up of them. Taking the negative arguments first, these may, I believe, be classed under three headings: (1) Religious; (2) Philosophical; (3) Scientific.

(1) Strictly speaking, there is no religious opposition to the theory of survival, as such—since practically all religions teach this. Opposition is centered upon the doctrines of Spiritualism, which claims to *prove* it. I have already commented upon the paradoxical situation which this opposition presents. The objections are mainly based upon Biblical quotations. But it may be pointed out, on the contrary, that the Bible is filled with references to psychic phenomena of all kinds, closely paralleling those reported today; and Moses Hull has written a whole book, *An Encyclopaedia of Biblical Spiritualism*, in which these correspondences are enumerated. However, I shall not take time to dwell upon this aspect of the problem, since such objections need have but little weight in a purely scientific question.¹

¹ See my *Loaves and Fishes* (1935) for a discussion of this question.

(2) Philosophical arguments may be similarly dismissed with scant courtesy. Arguments might be advanced on either side indefinitely—as the history of philosophy teaches us! Here, as elsewhere, philosophy will have to conform to *facts*, and hence the question becomes a purely scientific one.*

(3) The scientific objections to any form of survival are on the other hand serious and weighty. These may perhaps be summarized somewhat as follows:

(a) Evolution has shown us that the mind of man has seemingly progressed and become perfected just in proportion to the development of his brain; definite links connect man with the lower forms of life, and hence it is absurd to speak of man's potential immortality unless one is prepared to grant similar immortality to all lower forms of life, even including the vegetable.

(b) There is no definite evidence in favor of survival. Billions of human beings have died, but, of these—

None have returned to tell us of the Road
Which, to discover, we must travel too.

(c) Mind is a function of the brain, and when the brain ceases its functional activities, mind necessarily ceases to exist—just as the electric light ceases to exist

* A lengthy discussion of the general philosophical, theological and "common" arguments for immortality may be found in my *Death: Its Causes and Phenomena*, wherein an attempt was made to show that none of these arguments, taken by themselves, could be considered conclusive, and emphasizing the point that we must, in the last analysis, be governed by scientific evidence *pro* or *con*: i.e., by *facts*. These facts are seemingly furnished only by psychic phenomena!

when the switch is turned off, or the blood ceases to circulate when the heart stops.

(d) The tendency of all modern science, and particularly psychological science, is toward some form of monism; and any dualistic scheme of things is therefore opposed to all the teachings of academic thought.

(e) Observation shows us that the mind of man begins in childhood, attains maturity with the maturity of the body and brain, and becomes senile with increasing old age. Therefore, the mind is necessarily dependent upon the physiological activities of the body, and in some way inseparably connected with them.

(f) Psychopathology shows us that injury to the brain invariably brings about a corresponding destruction of the mental powers; hence brain and mind are again shown to be fundamentally connected, and inseparable one from the other.

Much might be said by way of reply to these objections, did space permit. Briefly, however, it may be pointed out that all of them (except b) are variations of the old mind-body problem, which has been touched upon several times before, in the course of this book.

If, however, the "transmission" theory of consciousness be accepted as at least a theoretical possibility, this would enable us to account for the facts as fully and satisfactorily as the ordinary "production" theory. For, on this view, mind *uses* the brain as an instrument for its

expression—much as the pianist uses the piano for the rendition of his music; it would represent a *vehicle* for its expression only, and would no more create thought than the piano created the music—the ultimate source of which must be sought in the spirit of the artist. If the strings of the piano become loose or broken, perfect harmony cannot be elicited from it, and when the piano is smashed altogether no more music can be obtained from it. Similarly, by analogy, if the physiological mechanism of the brain be impaired, mind cannot use it for the expression of its activities, and a defective expression is evidenced in consequence. As to the theory of evolution, this may again be accounted for as fully on this view as on any other; for as Professor Schiller has suggested (*Riddles of the Sphinx*, p. 293):

“If the material encasement be coarse and simple, as in the lower organisms, it permits only a little intelligence to permeate through it; if it is delicate and complex, it leaves more pores and exits, as it were, for the manifestations of consciousness.”

Did space permit, it could be shown that this theory is as capable of covering and explaining all the facts as that more generally held. This, however, does not necessarily indicate that it is true! It is merely a rival hypothesis, enabling us to account for certain facts which are inexplicable on the generally held theory. These facts are *psychic phenomena*. If these actually occur, then some such relationship as that suggested above must necessarily be true—some form of “interactionism”

necessitated—in order to render the explanation of these phenomena possible. Let it be once again emphasized: the generally held theory as to the mind-body relationship does not enable us to explain psychic phenomena, while the interactionist theory does. William McDougall has emphasized this fact in his *Body and Mind*. This being so, it is simply a question of whether psychic phenomena exist; if they do, the currently held psychological theory as to the relations of brain and mind must be reconstructed accordingly.

Naturally, there is no space within this book to attempt any proof of the reality of genuine psychic phenomena. Such data are included in the hundred-odd volumes of the *Proceedings* and *Journals* of the Societies for Psychical Research, and in the thousands of books upon the subject which have been published. All students of the subject are agreed that genuine, supernormal phenomena exist. The final problem remains: Do any of these phenomena constitute proof of survival? We have seen that *a priori* arguments—religious, philosophical and scientific—cannot be held to constitute proof either for or against. It becomes merely a question as to whether psychic occurrences constitute such proof—insofar as “proof” is possible, in a problem of this kind.

It must be admitted that the majority of psychic phenomena—though genuinely supernormal in character—do not necessitate any spiritistic theory in order to account for them. It *may* be the true explanation for many

of them, but, so long as other hypotheses are available, we must necessarily stretch these to the utmost (in keeping with the law of parsimony) before accepting the spiritistic explanation. What, then, has psychical research to offer by way of proof?

There are certain individuals who are quite convinced by reason of some personal experience which they have had—some interior illumination or some seemingly direct contact with those who have “gone before.” Unfortunately, however, such personal experiences, convincing as they are to the individuals in question, are not as a rule convincing to others; they are incapable of being communicated (like nearly all such interior experiences) with anything like the fullness of their original effectiveness. We in the West desire objective proof, and such proof cannot be obtained by reason of such experiences. Therein we differ essentially from those of the East, where personal experience is the end invariably sought. But of the reality of such experiences objective proof is impossible. Hence we cannot accept as proof such mystic phenomena—valid as they may appear to those who have experienced them.

Telepathy, clairvoyance, premonitions and certain mediumistic phenomena, genuinely supernormal though they may be, also cannot be held to constitute proof of survival. They afford evidences that the mind of man possesses potencies and powers which are ordinarily unknown and unrecognized, it is true; but that is a very

different matter! They constitute a "wedge" which may be driven into the armor of materialistic philosophy. At the same time they constitute, paradoxically enough, some of the strongest arguments *against* survival—since, inasmuch as such supernormal powers undoubtedly exist, and can be exercised by the human spirit *in* the flesh—they have been used as possible explanations of numerous, still more striking phenomena, which would otherwise appear to be definitely spiritistic in character. It should perhaps be pointed out, in this connection, that those psychologists who refuse to accept telepathy, clairvoyance, etc., are definitely left without *any* explanation whatever, of certain mediumistic phenomena—which they can only attempt to dispose of by denying their existence.

Myers, as we know, while freely admitting that the subconscious mind is capable of explaining many seemingly spiritistic phenomena, nevertheless has contended that its latent and extraordinary potencies would seem to indicate that it is not the product of terrene evolution alone, and hence is indicative of its potential availability in some other (spiritual) sphere. It must be admitted, however, that this argument, taken by itself, could not be held strongly indicative of survival, and hence must be regarded as a purely subsidiary proof.

Many cases of apparitions of the dead are, again, extraordinarily suggestive and indicative of survival; but various alternate theories have been proposed which

are at least sufficiently ingenious to show us that, of themselves, they probably would not carry conviction.

Physical phenomena, even if accepted as genuinely supernormal, fall into the same category, and, as we know, there are now many students of the subject who regard them as part and parcel of the general problem of "supernormal biology."

We seem, therefore, compelled to fall back upon medium-cases of the "communication" type for the evidence which we require. *Do or do not* these communications—received through Mrs. Piper, Mrs. Garrett, Mrs. Leonard, etc.—afford us evidence of survival? That is the question we must now discuss.

The type of evidence we seek is that bearing upon *personal identity*—that is to say, evidence supplied by the communicating intelligence which strongly points to the conclusion that the alleged communicator is actually "there."¹ We know that individual streams of consciousness now exist, constituting the personalities known to us in life ("people"). These possess their own individual points-of-view, associations, memories, etc., which constitute the personalities we know. On the spiritistic theory, these are thought to retain precisely these same characteristics after death, and hence should give typical

¹ I cannot, in this place, take time to refer to the various philosophical teachings, descriptions of the "spiritual world," etc., which have been received—some of them very fine—since these all depend upon the actual existence of the alleged communicator at the time. Of themselves, they cannot be held to constitute *evidence* of survival; they assume interest only when this has been proved.

and individual reactions, characteristic of them, when answering questions or volunteering information *post mortem*.

Mediumistic communications of the better type frequently present these precise characteristics. In many of the Piper and Leonard sittings, for example, this free-and-easy, back-and-forth flow of personal conversation has been noted. The communicating entities have given, not only supernormal information—much of it unknown to the sitter—but they have displayed many psychological personal characteristics, which were typical of them in life, and which when displayed were immediately recognized by the sitter as strongly indicative of their presence and general attitudes.

Voluminous reports have been published, mainly in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R., which contain such supernormal information, certainly unknown to the medium, much of it unknown to the sitter. In those cases where such information is or has been known to the sitter, we must postulate telepathy as the possible explanation. There is a good deal of positive evidence seeming to prove that such is in fact *not* the case—instances, e.g., where facts well known to the sitter cannot be given, but facts quite unknown to him are freely narrated, etc. However, for purely evidential reasons, we must assume that this might conceivably have been their source, and hence such material cannot be held to be valid proof of survival.

The way in which this material was obtained, and its general characteristics, must be clearly understood. No physical "miracles" were involved. The messages were all obtained through automatic speech or automatic writing, while the medium was entranced. It is the *content* of the messages thus received which calls for solution.

Theoretically, what happens in such cases is this: The psychic or medium goes into trance—light or deep as the case may be—and in that state becomes susceptible to telepathic and other impressions from without. Of course, the telepathic messages are said to originate from some discarnate mind, in these instances. Or, more rarely, when the trance is deeper, the personality of the medium is said to be abstracted from the body altogether, and its place taken by the communicating entity, which thus for the time being usurps and manipulates the medium's body. Judging solely by appearances, these instances are certainly much rarer than the other type. All this, of course, is what is said to happen—assuming the genuinely external character of the messages received.

In order to give some idea of the natural to-and-fro type of communications received through Mrs. Piper in her heyday, the following extract may suffice. The sitters were Mr. and Mrs. Howard, and their daughter Katherine. The "communicator" was an old friend of theirs

in life, George Pelham, abbreviated to G.P. The stenographic account goes on:

[G.P. takes control of the voice, and personal greetings follow. Recognition of dress, also of shawl, which was asked for, and which was placed over Mrs. Piper's shoulders. . . .]

G.P. What is it that takes me to Paris? [The shawl had been worn in Paris frequently during a year. . . .] [G.P. then inquired what had been done with a special picture which he had owned.]

Mrs. H. That got torn up after you passed out, but here is a picture that I don't know whether you will recognize, but you used to know the place. [G.P. puts picture on top of the head.]

G.P. What is this? This is your summer house.

Mrs. H. Yes, you have it right.

G.P. But I have forgotten the name of the town.

Mrs. H. Don't you remember D——?

G.P. Oh, the little brick house and the little vine, grapevine some called them. Yes, I remember it all; it comes back as distinctly as the daylight. . . . Where is the little hen-house?

[All correct. The little brick hen-house that, like the house itself, was built solidly of brick, just did not come into the picture, but came to the very edge of it, so it was natural for George to ask where it was. The grape-

vine that covered the whole house up to the roof was a striking feature of it.]

Mrs. H. There is the painting [handing another picture].

G.P. No, I have no recollection of that.

Mrs. H. No, I painted it when you were not there. You never saw that.

G.P. It is not fresh to me at all; but this [fingering the photo of the house] is very clear. . . . Katherine.

Mrs. H. She remembers it too.

G.P. She was a little thing. Then you bought a place at some *ville*. [Katherine's age when she left D—— was six. We then bought the place at X——ville.]

G.P. Katherine, how is the violin? [She plays the violin.] To hear you playing it is horrible, horrible. . . .

Mrs. H. But don't you see she likes her music because it is the best she has?

G.P. No, but that is what I used to say, that it is horrible! [George was always more or less annoyed at hearing Katherine practice when she was beginning the violin as a little child.]

[A basket is put into the hands. This had been given as a Christmas present.]

G.P. That is mine. . . . Where is my lamp arrangement? I was very fond of that, you know. [He had expressly got a small light-shade that could be moved around the lamp, to keep the light from the eyes. . . .]

Mrs. H. I want you to see this [handing a paper].

G.P. You wrote that to me this morning. [It was a poem on death written that morning with G.P. in mind, but no reference to G.P. in it.]

[Another paper handed.]

G.P. That is a letter. That is mine. . . . But it was written a long time ago. [Correct. A letter of his written many years before.]

G.P. Give my regards to James Pierce. Tell him I could not speak to him, but I will again, and when you dine with him think of me. [George occasionally dined at the house of James Pierce in company with Mr. Howard.]

Mr. H. George, do you know whom this is from? [Handing an unopened newspaper enclosed in a wrapper as if just received in the mail.]

G.P. Is that Orenberg?

Mr. H. Yes.

G.P. Yes, that is he. . . . That is Orenberg, dear old fellow. . . . I would like to see him. . . .

This conversation, I submit, strikes one as being perfectly natural, and precisely the *sort* of thing one might expect when old friends meet. It is entirely different from the fishing and guessing type of material so often encountered in the cases of poor or pseudo-mediums. . . . The incident of the non-recognition of one picture handed to G.P. is, I think, quite striking, and illustrative of a point I should like to bring out, in this connection,

which is one of those subtle touches so indicative of genuine communication.

In order to make this point clear, I shall have to lead up to it by a simple illustration. Suppose you are walking down the street, and in the course of your walk you meet, let us say, five people, all known to you in different relationships. The first is your butcher, the second an old friend, the third your landlord, the fourth a casual acquaintance, and the fifth your sweetheart. You would greet all these people differently—with differing degrees of familiarity and pleasure. With your butcher you would pass the time of day; your old friend you would greet effusively; your landlord you might try to avoid! The casual acquaintance you would greet casually. Your sweetheart you would be delighted to see—and probably insist on walking with her for a little way, in whatever direction she might be going.

Now, when George Pelham “turned up” through Mrs. Piper, and began his “communications,” Dr. Hodgson tested his reactions by introducing to the trance (as the saying goes) about 150 persons, anonymously or by pseudonym. Thirty of these had been known to Pelham; none was known to Mrs. Piper. All these thirty were recognized by G.P. Their names were given, and Pelham greeted every one of them with the proper degree of familiarity. His old friends he greeted heartily; his acquaintances more or less formally. In the case of those individuals whom Pelham had never known, his “spirit”

rightly replied that he was sorry, but that he did not know or could not remember that person. . . . Assuming that G.P. was actually present, all this becomes perfectly natural. But how are we going to account for it on the assumption that the subconscious mind of the medium was merely play-acting the part, and simply pretending to be George Pelham? We should, I think, have to strain our naturalistic hypothesis very far in order to account for these extremely striking instances.

One or two more brief, illustrative examples of the type of material which used to be received through Mrs. Piper. At one sitting, an old man was described—a curious old character, wearing a peculiar sort of hat, having a long, gray beard. The hand then drew an oblong-shaped figure, and under it wrote: “Tickets, hoboes; he is laughing very hard!”

All this, seemingly, doesn’t make sense. But when the story behind it is told, it becomes not only intelligible, but extremely striking, as evidence of identity.

The story is that, many years before, in a small town in Pennsylvania, the old character so accurately described had in fact lived. He had a kindly heart, but was violently opposed to drink in any form. When passing Tramps asked him for money, he invariably gave them some—until he discovered that, instead of spending this money on food, they frequently spent it on drink. Whereupon he had a number of tickets printed up, entitling the bearer to a meal at a near-by restaurant. Sub-

sequently he discovered that the owner of the restaurant accepted the tickets, but gave the tramps drinks in their place! So that this was quite a joke on the old man, when it became known in the neighborhood.

We can now see the point of the communication: "Tickets, hoboos, he is laughing very hard!" Is this not precisely what we should expect, under the circumstances?

One more case. A lady of my acquaintance, as a young girl, had resided in St. Louis. She had moved East, when about nine or ten years of age, and had lived in New York subsequently. At one of her sittings with Mrs. Piper, an old man purported to communicate, giving his name as "Pat." Questioned further, he stated that he had been employed by her family, in St. Louis, and had frequently swept up the leaves around the house. Try as she would, however, the lady in question could not recall this old character, and asked him for some further proof of his identity. There was a pause for a few moments, and then this was written: "Hot biscuits on the end of a string!"

Now I submit that this is an unlikely thing to be guessed, and again, seemingly, does not make sense until the story behind it is unfolded. But when this remark was made, the sitter suddenly remembered that there *had* in fact been an old man named Pat, who used to sweep up the leaves 'round the house; and furthermore remembered that this old man had lived in a small

shack, at the foot of a precipice, and that often, after meals, she would secretly gather up cakes and biscuits, tie them together, and lower them over the side of the cliff to the old man at the bottom! We now see, therefore, the extreme pertinence of the remark, "Hot biscuits on the end of a string," which had been injected as evidence of identity. How, on ordinary theories, are we to account for a case of this character? And does it not, so far as we can see, bear all the ear-marks of genuine memory and communication?

.

But here the question naturally arises: May not all this personification be due to clever play-acting on the part of the medium's subconscious mind? We know that, in our dreams, we unconsciously create characters with whom we can have long conversations and arguments—but which are, undoubtedly, mere fabrications of our dream-minds. We know that we can hypnotize a subject, and suggest to him that he is Napoleon Bonaparte—or even a cat or a dog—and he will act out the part with considerable verisimilitude. We know that we can, by the sheer use of our imagination, create fictitious characters within our own minds, which come to life and often play out their appropriate rôles. All this being so, the question is: May not these alleged spiritual Entities also be mere subconscious fabrications, dramatized by the medium, and falsely passing themselves off as spirits of the departed?

We psychical researchers are fully alive to this possibility—so much so, in fact, that we have accepted the general axiom that almost no amount of dramatic personification would in itself constitute evidence of survival. There are cases, it is true, where this dramatization is extremely striking, and explained with the utmost difficulty; but, as I have said, we have accepted the broad general principle that this dramatic play in itself is insufficient, and that convincing evidence, if ever obtained, must come from some other direction.

Here we encounter our second—and main—problem. Permit me to call your attention to the fact that, in all the above instances, where these subconsciously fabricated personalities are, so to say, naturally or artificially created—in dream, reverie, hypnotic trance, and so forth—these personalities do not supply us with *supernormal information*, as they do in the mediumistic trance. It is in this respect that the two differ. It is all very well to suggest to a hypnotic subject that he is, say, Mr. Pickwick; doubtless he will act out the part to the best of his ability. But suppose you suggest that he play the part of Anthony Trowbridge—a *real person*, well known to you in life, whose characteristic reactions and responses you would be in a position to evaluate, and judge—could he successfully do that, if he had never seen or heard of Anthony Trowbridge in his life? The answer is, *No!* If he made the attempt to do so, his imaginary characterization would most certainly differ from that

of the real personality entirely. How *could* he know, normally, what Anthony Trowbridge would say or do, or what memories he possessed, or his mental characteristics, if he had never seen him? Very obviously, his guessing and fictionized characterization would result in the depiction of a character entirely different from that known to you in real life.

Herein, then, lies the difference. In these mediumistic cases, we *do* constantly encounter these accurate depictions of people who have "passed on," and who were quite unknown to the medium in life. Furthermore, these assumed Entities sometimes supply us with a mass of supernormal information, displaying evidences of identity and memories which would be quite natural and typical of those personalities in life. It is this supernormal information which differentiates the mediumistic trance and the mediumistic communications from any of the others—from those obtained in dreams or hypnotic states or psychopathic conditions. If the person purporting to be present is not actually communicating, it has been contended, then whence and how is this supernormal information derived?

Unfortunately, the solution of this problem is not as simple as that! We know, from experiments carried out in other directions, that *telepathy* is a fact—that one mind can somehow "tap" another mind, extracting from it certain thoughts and memories, even though some of these may be long past and forgotten. Time and space

seem to be no bar to this telepathic transfer. This being so, the question may well be raised: How are we to eliminate this possibility of telepathy, in cases of this character? If the facts concerning a deceased person are in the mind or memory of the sitter, how are you going to prove that these facts might not have been somehow "fished out" of his mind, by means of telepathy, and palmed off on the sitter as genuine communications from the Beyond?

Again, we psychical researchers have taken this possibility into account; we have even been accused of leaning over backwards in our endeavors to stand up straight! For we have laid it down, as a general working principle, that if the facts given us by a medium are, or at any time were, in the mind of the sitter, these facts should be discounted as evidence of survival.

But statements of fact are frequently made which were certainly *never* in the mind of the sitter—references to events which he never knew, but which he subsequently verified and found correct. Often, this verification has been obtained from other members of the family, through correspondence—and often lengthy correspondence! What then? The objection might still be raised that, if the information obtained was in *any living mind*, might not this have been obtained by some more extended kind of telepathy—one capable of contacting any mind, anywhere in the world, inasmuch as time and space seem to be no bar to its operation? We

therefore have these two alternate explanations, these possible alternatives, offered as potential solutions of the communication-material obtained through our best mediums: genuine spiritistic messages, on the one hand; or, some omniscient sort of telepathy, on the other. Which of these alternatives is the correct one? Or is there some possible third alternative which we have not thus far taken into account?

These questions have been discussed, *pro* and *con*, over hundreds and hundreds of printed pages, in the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research and elsewhere. There is as yet no unanimity of opinion on the part of psychic students, as to which of these varied possibilities is the most probable, and which most adequately covers and explains all the facts. Some are inclined to one view, and some to another. But at any rate the problem is now squarely before us, and, confronted with it, psychical researchers have had to put their wits to work, to devise some tests which might conceivably exclude one of these alternatives, thereby rendering the other all the more probable. If tests could be devised which would exclude telepathy—even of the omniscient kind above mentioned—then we should indeed have gone far in our efforts to demonstrate human survival.

Well, many tests of this character *have* been devised and tried. Among the first of these were so-called “*post mortem* letters.” A living person would write a letter, or leave a key-message of some kind, and this letter would

be safely deposited in the archives of the Society. Some time later this individual dies. He purports to return and give the contents of the message. The letter is then opened and the two are compared. If the two correspond, there is at least some evidence that the mind which composed the one message also composed the other. . . . Several of these letters have been tried—thus far, it must be admitted, with but scant success. In one or two instances, the *thought* contained in the one corresponded to some extent with the thought contained in the other; but others failed completely, and, partly because of this, and partly because it would be difficult in any case to rule out the possibility of “clairvoyance” on the part of the medium, these tests have been largely abandoned—though there are still several letters of the kind to be tried.

Then we have obtained what are known as “cross correspondences.” In these cases *parts* of a message are obtained through the instrumentality of one psychic, and other parts through another. These fragments, fitted together, are often found to complement one another, and are capable of being fitted together like a mosaic. Many of these cross-correspondences are enormously complicated and detailed, and it must be admitted that the evidence here is sometimes very striking. The indications are that a single directing mind is involved—giving part of the message through one sensitive and part of it through another—rather than some sort of telepathic

inter-play between the sensitives themselves—since each part of the message, taken by itself, did not, so to say, “make sense.” These cases have again been discussed over hundreds of printed pages.

Again, we have cases where extraordinary classical knowledge has been displayed. Several of our former members—Dr. Verrall, Dr. Butcher and Mr. Frederic Myers, for example—were great classical scholars. Through the instrumentality of several of our mediums, references were made to obscure and recondite passages in the early Greek and Roman authors—so little known that even living classical scholars of repute did not recognize them, and only discovered them after prolonged and laborious hunting. Needless to say, the majority of the psychics employed were far from being classical scholars, being women of very limited education. These cases of classical scholarship are again highly impressive.

Next, we have cases known as Book and Newspaper Tests. I shall refer merely to the latter. In these instances a series of predictions are made as to the exact page and column in which may be found names and other data, which are to appear in *tomorrow morning's* newspaper! The sitting at which this information was secured was held, let us say, this afternoon. The record of the sitting was immediately mailed to the Society for Psychical Research, and, although it only arrived there tomorrow morning, the postmark on the envelope indi-

cated the time when it was posted. In this sitting names, dates, and so forth, are given, and the exact position on the page indicated. Sure enough, when tomorrow's paper is obtained, these names, dates, etc., are found precisely in the positions indicated! Careful inquiries were made at the paper—as to whether it would be possible for anyone to secure this information in advance—and the reply was that it would be quite impossible; no one could tell at that time where any given "story" would fall, and furthermore much of the "copy" used in the paper the next morning had not as yet even been written!

Here, then, we have a remarkable series of prophecies, well verified and evidenced at the time. . . . But more than this, and still more striking, is the fact that the particular names and other factual material, chosen for identification, were precisely the names which *would* be selected by the alleged communicator, were he in truth sending the messages. Let me make this clear by means of an illustration, since the point is so important.

Suppose, for example, that I—Hereward Carrington—were actually sending a message of this sort *post mortem*. The message might be something to the following effect:

"Look in tomorrow morning's *Times*, page 3, column 4, and you will find the name of a town in which I lived when I was twelve years of age. . . . Three inches below this you will find the name of a boy I knew very well at that time, when living there."

You look at the spots indicated and you find, "Minneapolis—Buffington." Now, it is true that *I* lived in Minneapolis when I was twelve years of age, and my closest friend was a boy named Harry Buffington. But of how many people, in a potential audience of ten million, would this be true? Doubtless, not one! Here, then, you will observe, not only were my predictions true, but my specific, personal memories were drawn upon in supplying the information given at the time. . . . Incredible as all this may appear, I can only assure the reader that highly successful newspaper tests of this character have been given, and may be found in the *Proceedings* of the Society.

Experiments have also been tried—using the purely laboratory approach—e.g., employing word-association tests, the galvanometer, etc., much in the same way that psycho-analysts have employed these devices in studying their patients. We ourselves employed these methods for two years in our American Psychical Institute, while experimenting with the well-known Psychic, Mrs. Eileen Garrett. The results we obtained were extremely striking; but, inasmuch as these tests were of a highly technical character, I shall not attempt to summarize them now. (Those who may be interested will find them recorded in our *Bulletin No. 1.*)

The question may now be asked: Has any information ever been given which is certainly in *no* living mind, but which was subsequently investigated and found correct?

Yes, there *are* cases of this character—which you will observe effectually bar out telepathy—though they are relatively few and far between, as we might perhaps expect. For, when one comes to think of it, it is extremely difficult to devise any test of the kind which will meet our requirements. If the information supplied is in any living mind, it falls short of our standard; while if it is in *no* living mind, how are you going to verify the information, once given? Notwithstanding these difficulties, several highly successful tests of this character *have* been made. . . . I might refer to the case of James L. Chaffin, wherein a Will was discovered—under direction—the existence of which was unknown to anybody. Mr. F. Bligh Bond, in his book *The Gate of Remembrance*, has told us of the finding of Edgar Chapel, at Glastonbury Abbey, as the result of excavations undertaken years after the original messages had been received, and long before the ground was broken. Mr. Hamlin Garland has narrated the story of finding numbers of extraordinary old crosses, buried hundreds of miles apart, in his book *The Mystery of the Buried Crosses*. There may be found, scattered through psychic literature, quite a number of instances of this character, where information was received, unknown to any living mind. . . .

I shall refer to one more highly evidential, though somewhat rare, type of evidence of identity which is sometimes obtained. This is the speaking of a foreign

language—a language which the medium certainly does not know. I quote from a Report by Dr. Frederick van Eeden, of Holland, who was not only a psychical researcher of repute, but also a trained psychologist. His acute analysis of his own reactions is alone of great interest, while the material he obtained in his sittings with Mrs. Thompson—an Englishwoman and an amateur psychic—is most striking. In his Report to the Society he says:

“... A young man who had committed suicide gave as proofs of his identity Dutch names and places which were not at all in my mind at the moment. This might have been unconscious telepathy. At the same time proper names were given which I had never heard myself. I did not even know such names existed. Yet later, in Holland, I came across people who bore these very names, though their connection (if any) with the young man I could not find out. . . .

“My personal impression (of the value of the evidence) has varied in the following manner. During the first series of experiments, I felt a very strong conviction that the person whose relics I had brought with me, and who had died fifteen years ago, was living as a spirit and was in communication with me through Mrs. Thompson. A number of small particulars produced on me, when taken *en bloc*, the effect of perfect evidence. To regard these all as guesses made at random seemed

absurd: to explain them by telepathy forced and insufficient.

“But when I came home, I found on further inquiry inexplicable faults and failures. If I had really spoken to the dead man, he would never have made these mistakes. . . . Consequently, my opinion changed. There were the facts, quite as certain and marvelous as before. I could not ascribe them to fraud or clairvoyance, but I began to doubt my first impression, that I had really dealt with the spirit of a deceased person; and I came to the conclusion that I had dealt only with Mrs. Thompson, who, possessing an unconscious power of information quite beyond our understanding, had acted the ghost, though in perfect good faith. . . .

“But on my second visit . . . when I took with me the piece of clothing of the young man who had committed suicide, my first impression came back, and with greater force. I was well on my guard, and if I gave hints, it was not unconsciously, but on purpose; and, as will be seen from the notes, the plainest hints were not taken, but the truth came out in the most curious and unexpected ways. . . .

“Up to the sitting of June 7th, all information came through ‘Nellie,’ Mrs. Thompson’s so-called spirit-control. But on that date, the deceased tried, as he had promised, to take the control himself, as the technical term goes. The evidence then became very striking. Dur-

ing a few minutes—though a few minutes only—I felt absolutely as though I were speaking to my friend himself. I spoke Dutch and got immediate and correct answers. The expression of satisfaction and gratification on face and gesture, when we seemed to understand one another, was too vivid to be acted. Quite unexpected Dutch words were pronounced, details were given which were far from my mind, some of which, as that about my father's uncle in a former sitting, I had never known, and found to be true only on inquiry afterwards. . . .”

Dr. van Eeden concludes his Report in the following words:

“... Being now well on my guard, I could, exactly in this most interesting few minutes, detect, as it were, where the failures crept in. I could follow the process and perceive when the genuine phenomena stopped and unconscious play-acting began. In hardly perceptible gradations the medium takes upon herself the rôle of the spirit, completes the information, gives the required finish, and fills in the gaps by emendation and arrangement. . . .

“We see how recklessly and carelessly the ‘spirit-control,’ Nellie, enters into explanations about things of which she evidently understands nothing, though she referred to them spontaneously herself. And we see,

moreover, how easily and imperceptibly the rôle of any spirit is taken up by the medium, after the genuine information has ceased. . . .

“At this present moment it is about eight months since I had my last sitting with Mrs. Thompson, in Paris, and yet when I read the notes again, it is impossible for me to abstain from the conviction that I have really been a witness, were it only for a few minutes, of the voluntary manifestation of a deceased person.”

This curious fluctuation in the evidential value of the material received—this mixture of wheat and chaff—even in sittings with the best mediums—was commented upon at some length by Prof. William James, who advanced the theory that there might be a number of genuine “points of contact,” so to say, at which supernormal information was given, but that, between these contact-points, the subconscious mind of the medium (which is never wholly absent) rambled along and injected a certain amount of “padding.” If this be true, it would account in large part for the alternating good and bad material received—the “hits” and the “misses.” We psychic students have constantly noted this baffling phenomenon, and the sifting of the wheat from the chaff is one of the most difficult tasks confronting us in our investigations. That is one of the reasons why this subject is so complicated and so difficult.

And this brings me to another point which should,

I think, be emphasized. This is the very great difference of opinion which exists between cautious psychical researchers and the Spiritualists. For them, communication with the next world is the easiest thing imaginable; every time an alleged Entity comes along and claims to communicate he is in fact present and communicating! We psychical researchers hold a very different view. We maintain that—while the evidence is at times very striking, and that such evidence (if not proof) of continuity has certainly been obtained—we also believe that this evidence is extremely *rare* and obtained only on the rarest of occasions. There is a *prima facie* case, but such evidence is not obtained easily, or through every Tom, Dick and Harry—as the Spiritualists believe. Perhaps I cannot do better than sum-up this point by quoting a few remarks by Prof. William Romaine Newbold, formerly of the University of Pennsylvania, when he said:

“A friend of mine once said to me . . . ‘Scientific men cannot say much longer that there is no evidence for a future life. I have said it, but I shall say it no longer. I know that there *is* evidence, for I have seen it. I do not believe in a future life. . . . I regard it as one of the most improbable of theories. The evidence is scanty and ambiguous and insufficient, but it *is* evidence, and it must be reckoned with. . . .’”

Professor William James similarly wrote:

“It is enough to indicate these various possibilities, which a serious student of this part of nature has to

weigh together, and between which his decision will fall. His vote will always be cast (if ever it be cast) by the sense of the dramatic probabilities of nature, which the sum-total of his experience has begotten in him. I myself feel as if an external will to communicate were probably there; that is, I find myself doubting, in consequence of my whole acquaintance with that sphere of phenomena, that Mrs. Piper's dream life, even equipped with 'telepathic' powers, accounts for all the results found. . . ."

And Dr. Richard Hodgson, at the conclusion of his last, lengthy Report on Mrs. Piper, wrote:

" . . . I cannot profess to have any doubt but that the chief 'communicators' . . . are veritably the personalities that they claim to be; that they have survived the change we call death, and that they have directly communicated with us whom we call living through Mrs. Piper's entranced organism. . . . Having tried the hypothesis of telepathy from the living for several years, and the 'spirit' hypothesis also for several years, I have no hesitation in affirming with the most absolute assurance that the 'spirit' hypothesis is justified by its fruits, and the other hypothesis is not. . . ."

These words are, I think, impressive—coming as they did from a man known to be as cautious and even skeptical as Dr. Hodgson. He sat with Mrs. Piper constantly for nearly twenty years, and had had great experience as an all-round psychic investigator. William

James had the utmost respect for Dr. Hodgson's opinion—and we have seen what that opinion was. . . .

I have often been asked, "Do you personally believe in survival?" I quite realize that my books and often my lectures may have produced a certain feeling of exasperation in my readers (or listeners) by reason of the cautious, "on the fence" attitude which I have generally assumed—usually preferring to give the evidence, and let the reader form his own opinions, *or* state the opinions of certain outstanding psychical researchers, as illustrative of the conclusions *they* have reached. Inasmuch as many of these researchers have been, and are, far abler and more famous than myself, I have always felt that this course was justified.

Dr. Hyslop used to say that, if he were addressing an audience composed of scientific men, their attitude would be: "I don't care about your conclusions; give me the facts!" If, on the contrary, he was addressing a general audience, their attitude would be: "I don't care about your facts; give me your conclusions!" Of course this was said half-facetiously, but it embodied a basic truth nevertheless.

Well, some questions cannot be answered by a direct "Yes" or "No,"—although the average person may think that they can and should be. We all know the old story of the question, "Are you still beating your wife?" Well, there are many questions in metaphysics, for example—and certainly in psychical research—

which fall into this same category. Before they can be answered specifically, they must be clarified and their meanings accurately defined.

If, by survival, is meant immortality, in the old theological sense—involving Heaven, Hell, Judgment, and all the rest—then I would say unreservedly that I do *not* believe in *such* survival, or rather in such a form of survival. I do not believe that the soul of man is destined to survive in any such world as this.

If by Survival is meant some form of absorption of the individual mind and consciousness into some impersonalized Universal Consciousness, I do not believe that either. And for two reasons. In the first place, it seems to me that this is really no survival at all, in the sense in which we Westerners conceive it. All the toil and sweat and effort which we have put into building up an integrated, sane, normal Personality; all the knowledge we have acquired; any perfection of character or enlargement of consciousness we may have attained—would all seem to be lost, and represent a mere waste of time on our part, if this individualized consciousness does not persist as such. I realize that analogies are often drawn here, to certain events in the material world, which seem to show the persistence of matter and energy—or at least of energy, the substratum of matter. A candle is burned, for instance. We all know that, if the products of its combustion be carefully preserved, these

will equal the weight of the candle—showing that the matter composing it has not really been destroyed (as one might think) but that it continues to persist in some other form, or forms—though perhaps impalpable to our senses. Similarly, and by analogy, it has been contended, the psychic elements or constituents of our Being must be conserved in some form, or in some manner—even though they may be absorbed into some more impersonalized, universal consciousness.

My reply to this is that, while it is true that the elements constituting the candle are undoubtedly preserved—as shown by the equivalence of weights—nevertheless the candle *as a candle* ceases to exist when it is consumed in combustion. No candle-maker would recognize his own child, when shown the end-products! Similarly, it seems to me, the individualized human consciousness—attained as the result of so much work and effort on our part—would likewise cease to exist *as such*, if it were absorbed into some larger, universal consciousness, as postulated. I cannot help feeling that we should have had all our pains for nothing!

My second reason for refusing to accept this view is that, if there is any validity at all in the “communications” which have come to us, it is obviously disproved by the facts. For, in such “communications,” we have evidence of the persistence of an individual consciousness, continuing to persist long after death, possessing

memories, thoughts, associations, and all the rest, which in life constituted that very personality, which we knew and loved, and which ostensibly is communicating with us now, giving evidences of its continued individuality and persistence. If any form of disintegration or absorption were imperative, this surely would be impossible—and hence is negated by the facts.

There are those who claim to believe in “survival”; but what they mean is really no survival at all, in our sense of the term. Their contention is that we survive in our progeny, and in the memories of others who may survive us. . . . These alleged “analogies” are of course entirely fallacious. Every cat and dog, every flea and fish, continues its life in and through its descendants; but the individual dog or flea ceases to live as an individualized entity when it dies—that is, it ceases to be that particular dog or flea. You can readily see that this idea, when examined, is just as fallacious as that advanced in the case of the candle—being in fact a sort of variation of it. We have merely shown that the germ-plasm is potentially immortal (as biologists today believe) but not that the individual bearing that germ-plasm is similarly immortal!

As to the idea that we continue to live in the memories of our friends and relatives, this of course no more proves that we are actually surviving than the memory of a fire proves that the fire is still burning! It is a pure trick, a subterfuge, advanced by those who pretend to

believe in human survival, while as a matter of fact they believe nothing of the sort. . . .

The only form of survival with which we, as individuals, may justly concern ourselves, it seems to me, is that which involves the continuity of individualized human consciousness—meaning by this, of course, the *totality* of our mental being. It is quite possible—indeed seemingly inevitable, as William McDougall has shown, in his *Body and Mind*—that the superficial consciousness known to us, and utilized by us in our daily lives, *does* disappear at death—since this is largely a product of the bodily activities and the physical senses. . . . But we are more than that! When you tie your shoe-lace, for example, you are intent upon that action, and your whole interest and mental being is seemingly centered upon that simple act. But in the background, constituting your Greater Self, are all those millions of memories, thoughts, ideas and emotions which you have accumulated and stored through all the years of your active living. I do not believe, therefore, that this superficial ephemeral Self persists beyond death, since it is largely the product and resultant of the bodily activities and sensory experiences.

If anything survives, it is this deeper Self within us—this vaster mental background, upon which our life's experiences are imprinted. Herein resides the reservoir of our memories; it is doubtless this and this alone which constitutes the essence and core of our Being, it

is the very "self of selves" as James called it)—the individualized Entity which alone is capable of and worth surviving.

There is, I think, much scientific evidence that such a mental or spiritual Principle survives, and I feel that, in some sphere of its own, it undoubtedly does. What the ultimate destiny of this surviving Entity may be I have no conception. But it seems to me reasonable to suppose that the same Guiding Principle which evolved and perfected such an entity, through countless æons of evolution, should continue to guide and perfect it in some other Sphere—in whatever world it may find itself after the Great Transition. But any such assurance, I again repeat, has been rendered possible only by the findings of psychical research, and would be utterly negligible in the absence of psychic phenomena. It is they and they alone which render possible any such spiritual philosophy. . . .

3

IT IS FULLY RECOGNIZED BY PSYCHICAL RESEARCHERS that "proof" of survival is a most difficult, if not unachievable, task. Indeed, it seems highly probable that we shall never succeed in obtaining "proof" of the kind we obtain in chemistry, physics and the other material sciences. The kind of proof we may hope to obtain more nearly resembles *legal* proof; the "balance of probabilities" being so great that every sane person, familiar with the evidence, will come to a similar conclusion. The alternate possibilities—the *pros* and *cons* of the subject—must be placed in the mental balance, and judged accordingly. The point at which conviction is reached differs in all of us; and, as Prof. Charles Richet has so beautifully shown us, "certainty does not follow on demonstration, it follows on habit." A habit of thought, engendered in us by long years of training, the pressure of our environment, our childhood upbringing, our religious background—all play an enormously important part in our emotional and mental reaction to any given situation—and particularly in a question such as this, where rigid objective proof is lacking, and where emotional factors are to some extent involved. What one man will accept easily, and almost as a matter of course, another will reject fiercely—as opposed not

only to his wishes but to his whole mental set-up. That is why the out-and-out Spiritualists and we psychical researchers are constantly at loggerheads. We have but scant sympathy for their "resolute credulity," while they cannot understand our seemingly skeptical and exasperatingly critical attitude. It is rare indeed to find a man who is so emotionally balanced and detached that he can judge the material before him dispassionately and come to a completely calm and unbiased verdict. When we find such a man he constitutes, in our estimation, an ideal psychical researcher!

It must always be remembered that, if another world exists at all, and if contact with it is ever made—as many believe—there must be enormous intra-cosmic difficulties to be overcome. If it were as easy as some contend, it would assuredly be a matter of more or less common knowledge and acceptance—instead of being rare and well-nigh unbelievable, as it is regarded today. It is quite possible that the ability to *send* such messages is just as rare as the ability adequately to *receive* them: that is, that a certain mental and emotional make-up, a certain psychic ability, if you like, is necessitated in order to render this possible. And, just as there are relatively few people in our midst who are naturally good sensitives, or receivers, so there may be but few good "senders"—*desirous* as they might be of sending such messages.

Other theoretical difficulties likewise confront us. For

example, we are accustomed to manipulate our own bodies, so to say, and utilize them for the purposes of our daily manifestation. But suppose you were suddenly transferred into some *other* living body—perhaps some-one of the opposite sex—whose nervous mechanism you were called upon to utilize and manipulate; it is highly probable that you would encounter all sorts of checks, hindrances and difficulties which the unfamiliar habits of that organism would entail. If the young lady of the song “couldn’t make her eyes behave,” how many more difficulties might we not expect to encounter in trying to manipulate another body altogether! For these and other reasons, therefore, which have been discussed at length by psychic students, it is perhaps only fair to assume that—even if survival be a fact, and communication theoretically possible—there might be almost insuperable difficulties to be overcome in such a process, and these might well account for the relative scarcity of the material thus far obtained, pointing to its actuality. The bridge between the two worlds is not lightly crossed; indeed it seems to be crossed with such difficulty that the majority of people are inclined to believe that it is never crossed at all, and are even inclined to doubt that there is in truth another shore to which this Bridge is anchored! Only the cumulative weight of evidence can tend to settle that question—researches which may be carried out by intrepid investigators in the future. Let us hope that these researches will in fact be made!

Whatever one may think of the evidence which has thus far been secured, there can be no question, I think—at least in the minds of scientific men—that our *method* is the right one. We study certain phenomena—bizarre and ambiguous, it is true, but nevertheless real—and endeavor to formulate working hypotheses which rationally and adequately cover and explain these odd facts. We seek to interpret them in the light of our present knowledge, utilizing the tools and the methods of science, in so doing, as far as possible. . . .

The evidence for survival which we have thus far obtained may not be conclusive; in some ways it may leave much to be desired; but at least evidence *has* been obtained—some of it of a very striking character. And the method, in attempting to obtain it, is sound. Furthermore, it is thus far the *only* evidence available. . . . I mean by this the only scientific evidence. Religion and philosophy may well bring forward specious arguments, or appeal to our faith, or reason that it is only logical and in keeping with the fitness of things; but the scientific man wants evidence, and such evidence can only be secured, so far as we can see, by the means and methods employed in psychical research—which alone, of all the sciences, attempts to answer the question of man's future, and provide evidence of the sort calculated to impress and perhaps ultimately to convince the skeptical scientific world.

It will be seen, therefore, that much hinges upon the

validity or non-validity of these phenomena—both for science and for philosophy. . . . At the same time, we must not let our wishful thinking get the better of our good judgment and common sense. We wish to know the truth at all costs, for, as Dr. Hyslop used to say, “this is a problem in which we do not wish to fool ourselves.” Let us attempt to summarize very briefly, therefore, the pros and cons of this subject, and endeavor to see to what extent the spiritistic hypothesis is justified by the facts, or contradicted by them, in the light of our latest researches.

As against Spiritualistic hypothesis it may be urged:

(1) That no material has ever really been given which was not known to the medium, or which might not have been guessed or inferred from the remarks of the sitter.

(2) That lying and erroneous “communications” have often been received, quite uncharacteristic of the alleged communicator.

(3) That many of these messages are trivial, ignorant, pedantic and ungrammatical.

(4) That no scientific or other facts of importance have ever been given to the world, which are essentially new.

In reply it may be said:

(1) This objection is entirely unfounded, being based on ignorance of the very great quantity of definitely supernormal material which has been obtained in the past.

(2) This is a weighty objection, and can only be met, in part, by assuming (a) that the communicators were not mentally alert and aware of what they were saying at the time, or (b) that the majority of such communications emanate in truth from the subconscious mind of the medium. I think that every serious psychic investigator would admit that the vast majority of such mediumistic messages have this source; it is only occasionally that such communications seem to bear a truly spiritistic stamp, and it is upon these that the argument rests.

(3) What has been said above applies here also, to a very large extent. On any theory, the subconscious mind of the medium must play some part in the transmission of messages, and color and influence them to some extent. This has been freely admitted and discussed at great length by psychical researchers in their various Reports.

(4) This again must be acknowledged as a serious objection to the too-ready acceptance of the spiritistic theory. It is true that certain material of an interesting scientific and philosophical character has come through mediums, but certainly nothing like the amount which one might be entitled to expect, *a priori*, if the individuals who claim to communicate were really "there." One might say, perhaps, that researches are not carried on, on the "other side," in the same manner that they are here, in our material world; and indeed, if a next world

exists, and if it is a *mental* world of some sort, as we have been told, then it would be difficult to conceive how this could be possible.

It might be contended, again, that when the door of potential communication is opened, men and women "on the other side"—scientists and non-scientists alike—would utilize the precious moments for sending personal messages to their loved ones still on earth, rather than in communicating some recently discovered fact—without knowing whether such fact had been discovered here in the interim or not. This might be a partial explanation, based on the frailties of "human nature."

Again, the immense theoretical difficulties of communication must not be lost sight of (assuming its possibility), for, according to statements received, this is of tremendous complexity and accomplished only under extraordinary handicaps and obstacles. If a straightforward, personal "message" is given under such difficulties, how much greater the problem, theoretically, in conveying a complicated scientific formula by this means!

For many years Professor Charles Richet was one of the leading exponents of psychical investigation in Europe, and at the same time one of the strongest antagonists of the spiritualistic theory. He was, as we know, one of the leading physiologists in the world. In reviewing his book, Sir Oliver Lodge asked Richet how he would attempt to prove his existence, *post mortem*, were

he actually trying to do so. He enumerated a number of things which Richet might try, in order to prove his identity, and showed that all of them in turn might be "explained," and probably *would* be explained, in other ways! As one example he asks:

"Will he (Richet) tell us of some epoch-making scientific novelty? He could equally well tell us of it now. If he does not, it is probably because he does not specially know one—does not know now much more than he has already published, or read about in treatises by others. Why should a year or two apart from his laboratory make him more cognisant of physiology than he was here, with *corpora vilia* all round him and instruments at hand?"

A considerable amount of novel scientific material has in fact been received through mediums, who were often quite illiterate, which certainly seemed beyond their normal powers of construction or imagination. Examples of this may be found in a number of spiritistic books. To mention one specific case. Through Hudson Tuttle, an ignorant farmer boy of eighteen, a remarkable book was obtained, *The Arcana of Nature*, which was subsequently quoted by both Buchner (in his *Force and Matter*) and Darwin (*The Descent of Man*, p. 178). Whence was this information derived? Here is but one of several examples which might be quoted, illustrative of the fact that scientific material of value and originality is occasionally obtained through mediums normally incapable of conceiving or originating it.

At the same time it must be admitted that such instances are relatively rare, and the general tone of the alleged communications which have been received from, e.g., William James since his death do not maintain that level of brilliance and originality which marked James' work in life. It is true that the theoretical conditions under which the *ante mortem* and the *post mortem* essays have been written cannot be compared; the tremendous theoretical difficulties of communication (on the spiritualistic theory) must always be taken into account. At the same time, the relative paucity of original material of the kind which has been received is, to my mind, one of the stumbling blocks to the too-ready acceptance of Spiritism, and must serve as a steadying influence in our estimates of the pros and cons of this subject.

What has been said above also applies, to a great extent, to the much discussed question of "triviality." In this connection, however, it should be pointed out that researchers have frequently insisted upon trivial details purposely, as presenting the best evidence of identity. Such personal, trivial matters are the very ones which could not, in all probability, be known to the medium. Further, Hyslop showed, by actual experiment, that even exceptionally intelligent persons deliberately chose trivial incidents by which to identify themselves—when speaking to their friends over a long-distance telephone—which also partially disguised the voice. In these

cases, trivial incidents were nearly always selected, as data for personal identification.

Considering, now, this mass of material which has been obtained—the direct, personal communications; the specially devised tests, etc.—through the instrumentality of Mrs. Piper, Mrs. Leonard, Mrs. Garrett, and other good mediums—it may be said that three possible explanations present themselves. These are (1) some Cosmic Conscious theory, postulating a sort of mental reservoir, into which the mind of the medium dips, and from which it extracts information, during the course of her séances. (2) The theory of free and universal telepathy and clairvoyance (cryptaesthesia) in which all living minds are open to the trance-consciousness of the medium, which has the power of roving throughout the world in search of this information. (3) The Spiritistic theory, which contends that these messages really emanate from the personalities who purport to give them—perhaps under considerable difficulties, and often with a certain admixture of subconscious material supplied by the medium.

Which of these theoretical explanations is probably the correct one?

Professor Hans Driesch, in his *Psychical Research*, has considered, most sympathetically, the first of these—without, however, giving his adhesion to it. Personally, I must confess that I have but little patience with such

a theory. I can see no real evidence for it; there is no analogy for it anywhere in Nature; and it seems to me merely a gratuitous assumption introduced in an endeavor to evade the issue by advancing some seemingly plausible alternative hypothesis. Furthermore, I cannot see that it in any way serves to explain the facts. When a series of typical personal reactions are obtained, woven together into a composite personality known to us in life, how is any "Cosmic Reservoir" theory going to account for that? To my mind there are no facts to justify acceptance of any such theory. This being so, I must dismiss it from further consideration—until facts are brought to light tending to substantiate it!

The Spiritualistic hypothesis is of course the simplest, and capable of explaining the facts—though there are undoubtedly difficulties within it, and certain observed phenomena seemingly opposed to it. The fact that it is the simplest, however, does not necessarily prove that it is the correct one, and there are, as we have seen, certain psychic investigators who are opposed to it as the correct explanation. There are, on the other hand, many who regard it not only as the most inclusive and the most rational, but the theory which has most facts in its support. In any event, the theory requires no further explanation, being self-defined by reason of its very title.

There remains the theory of cryptaesthesia which contends that the subconscious mind of the medium somehow has the faculty of reaching out into space, contacting

all living minds, and from them extracting the correct information, which is subsequently woven together by the dramatizing power of the medium's mind into a coherent and consistent personality. In favor of this view are the facts that (a) the spiritistic theory would thereby be "avoided," and (b) there is a certain amount of experimental data in its support, e.g., telepathy, clairvoyance, etc., which have been otherwise established.

As opposed to this theory, however, there are several weighty objections, which may perhaps be summarized thus:

(1) *The necessary selectiveness of the process*—that is, the ability thus to obtain specific thoughts and memories from distant minds, relative to a particular individual, while ignoring the rest. We should have to assume that the thoughts and memories relative to the individual in question were in some manner "labeled," so to speak, so as to make them distinguishable from the rest, latent in the mind. For this there is no analogy in experimental thought-transference. Further, there is the peculiar fact that only memories of the *dead* are tapped in this manner.

In addition to this question of the necessary "selectiveness" of the process, with regard to the facts or memories chosen, the further problem arises as to *who* or *what* does the selecting? It must be by an intelligent mental entity of some sort, for otherwise no selection would be exercised. The only explanation (short of the

spiritistic) is that the subconscious mind of the medium does so. But, in that event, we are back again at our starting point, for how would this selective subconsciousness know *what* memories to choose, among the billions, in the millions of living minds everywhere in the Universe? Further, as we have seen, this difficulty is often enhanced by the fact that "intermediaries" are often seemingly employed (controls, etc.), who would on theory have no direct previous contact with, or even knowledge of, these living persons, and hence have no *rapport* with them. On the spiritistic theory, however, all this is avoided, since then the alleged "communicator" would merely be drawing upon *his own* memories—just as normal living persons draw upon their memories every day throughout life.

(2) *The magnitude of its application to all living consciousness and memory.* Aside from these phenomena, there is no scientific evidence that such a form of universal telepathy exists; experiments give no proof of its existence.

(3) *Inconsistency of its mistakes and confusion with the assumption of the easy access to all living memories.* If this omniscient telepathy be a fact, how account for the constant mistakes and confusions which should not occur, on such a theory, but which *do* occur, as a matter of fact, and which are often just the mistakes we should expect on the spiritistic hypothesis; that is, supposing the person were actually "there." Further, facts which

are well known to the sitter are not given at all, while facts are given of which he is entirely ignorant, and has to verify afterwards, by inquiry and correspondence. Also, the facts given are frequently those which made a deep impression upon the mind of the alleged communicator, but did not similarly impress other minds in like degree. Nevertheless these are the facts selected—which would be precisely what we should expect, were the individual in question actually there and communicating at the time.

(4) *Differences in the clearness of communicators.* These differences do not seem to depend primarily upon the mental state or memories of the sitter—which should be the case, if the telepathic hypothesis were true—but rather upon the communicator. Some are always “good” communicators, others always “bad”—no matter *who* the sitter may be. This seems to indicate that the clearness of the communications depends upon the communicator, and not upon the sitter—which is what we should expect upon the spiritistic theory, but not at all what we should expect upon the telepathic.

(5) *Inconsistency of the communications, and change of communicators.* During sittings of this kind, one communicator will frequently give place to another, either voluntarily or because he seems “tired” by the process, and becomes dazed and bewildered for the time being. On the telepathic hypothesis, we can see no valid reason for this change of communicators; the apparent diffi-

culties from which they suffer in communicating, etc. On the spiritistic hypothesis, this is all quite natural.

(6) *Inconsistency in its assumptions.* In order to make the telepathic hypothesis “work,” we must assume certain difficulties in the process, to account for the observed facts—the disconnected, fragmentary nature of the messages, etc. Yet the relative ease and flow of certain communications does not at all agree with this view of the case.

(7) *Variations in the point de repere.* The theory of selective choosing of facts and memories by the medium’s subliminal consciousness, because of their “color-tone” or “label of familiarity” is seemingly wrecked by the theory of intermediaries—an amanuensis on “the other side” who, it is said, does the writing, etc. This intermediary would, in the very nature of the case, have no personal *rapport* with the alleged communicator’s friends and relatives, from whose minds these memories are supposed to be obtained. Hence, the difficulties involved in this theory of universal telepathy are greatly increased in consequence.

(8) *Reproduction of what would be expected on the Spiritistic theory.* If selective telepathy be true, why does it not obtain for us many facts besides those given? Yet only those are given which we should expect on the spiritistic hypothesis! The statements made almost invariably relate to some deceased person, and are not at all the disjointed, hit-and-miss sort of facts we obtain

in experimental thought-transference. Why this fundamental difference between the two processes—if they are fundamentally the same?

(9) *Necessity of combining other processes and assumptions with telepathy.* In order to account for many of these “communications,” we should also have to assume clairvoyant, premonitory and other powers in the subconscious mind of the medium—just as Ptolemy had to devise “cycles and epicycles” to make his geocentric theory “work.” This seems rather unwarranted and unsupported by the facts.

(10) *Degrees of familiarity in recognition.* We all know our friends more or less intimately; we are more familiar with some than with others, etc. In many of these sittings the alleged communicator greets each sitter known to him in life with the suitable degree of familiarity, and asserts that he does not know other sitters, who were unknown to him in life. This, of course, would be perfectly natural on the spiritistic theory.

It will be seen, therefore, that once we consent to face the facts squarely, there is much to be said in favor of the spiritualistic explanation, and that there are enormous difficulties and complications in any other theory. It is easy to deny the existence of such psychic phenomena, or assume offhand that they do not exist. But if they *do*, then problems such as the above immediately present themselves and call for solution.

Two further points should be made, before closing this theoretical discussion. The first is that there are, according to the spiritistic theory, enormous difficulties and complications involved in the transmission of genuinely spiritistic communications. These are psychological, physiological, intracosmic. They have been dealt with at considerable length by various psychic investigators, and it is essential that these be taken into account, and their theoretical possibility admitted. Were this once done, it would enable us to account for many of the seeming failures and complications which arise in connection with these "communications."

The second point is that, once the spiritistic theory be granted, the really detailed study of the theoretical processes involved would only begin. In short, the problem, instead of being settled, would be merely propounded for further scientific study.

It must not be thought that I am definitely advocating the spiritistic hypothesis, merely because I am now calling attention to the difficulties encountered by opposing theories. In this connection, I may be permitted to recall the fact that I published a lengthy criticism of the spiritistic interpretation in *Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vol. XVII, pp. 337-59; and a further criticism of the Cross-correspondences in *Proceedings*, Vol. XXVII, pp. 458-66. I therein emphasized as forcibly as possible the innate difficulties of the spiritistic theory, and pointed out certain possible advantages of some alternate inter-

pretation of the facts. Since that time, much additional evidence, both *pro* and *con*, has been published, and I am frank in stating that, whereas some of this material (such as the Gordon Davis case, the objections raised by Professor Dodds, etc.) give us pause, the bulk of it inclines toward the spiritistic interpretation—the strength of which seems to me to be greatly enhanced by e.g., the Rev. Drayton Thomas' proxy sittings. On the whole, therefore, I think it only fair to admit that the trend of psychical investigation, during these past years, has been toward some spiritualistic explanation of the facts.

Were I to attempt to arrange psychic phenomena in the order of their relative "degree of probability," it would be somewhat as follows—always remembering that this represents merely my own personal estimate of their relational validity.

AS SCIENTIFICALLY PROVED

Extraordinary subconscious phenomena.

Hypnotism; psychic healing, etc.

Multiple personality.

Trance (mediumistic).

Crystal gazing.

Automatic speech and writing.

Supernormal dreams.

Telepathy.

Clairvoyance.

Psychometry.
Apparitions—coincidental.
Dowsing.
Telekinesis.
Raps (psychic).
Lights (psychic).

AS SO NEARLY ESTABLISHED AS TO
CONSTITUTE VIRTUAL PROOF

Premonitions.
Haunted Houses.
The Astral Body.
Psychic powers of animals.
Exteriorization of motivity.
Materialization.
Levitation of the human body.
Psychic photography.
Spirit Communications.

When considering the subject of psychic phenomena in general, and the question of survival in particular, we should, I think, be governed by two fundamental propositions. These are:

1. All is possible.
2. The strength of the evidence should be proportioned to the strangeness of the facts.

Now, to many minds, the idea of human survival is a fact most strange! Consequently, the evidence for it

should be proportionately strong. Psychic investigators have done everything in their power to make this evidence as convincing as possible—by the application of checks and tests of all kinds, both psychological and instrumental. They have studied and analyzed the results with the utmost care and caution. The result has been that many competent researchers have emerged quite convinced of the validity of the spiritistic interpretation, while others remain doubtful and others are still “on the fence.” It should, however, be added that practically every psychical researcher agrees in thinking that the evidence in favor of the spiritistic hypothesis is now so strong that it may justifiably be employed as a *working theory*—just as some particular theory of organic evolution may be utilized for the time being, as an aid to our thinking, and in order to clarify the problem and bring theoretical order out of chaos—until further discoveries necessitate some change, or changes, in the theory adopted.

Certain it is that the spiritistic theory, if established, would enable us to formulate some philosophy of the Universe, and give a meaning to life which would be impossible, in its absence. If life has any meaning, it must be a psychological meaning. Evolution has shown us the gradual perfection of the body, and the expansion of the living consciousness, during countless ages. Is the object of being to perfect a high spiritual consciousness in man? That might be a rational view of the

facts, provided there were some object in view in thus perfecting it. Perfecting a thing merely to destroy it does not show good common sense. Is there an ultimate destiny and utility for consciousness? If there be some form of permanence for that consciousness—yes! If there be none, it is hard to see the reason for its evolution and perfection.

How can we assure ourselves of its permanence? Only by obtaining scientific proofs of it, and these proofs can come to us only in one way. By obtaining specific *facts*, proving that consciousness still persists. This proof can come only by means of psychical research! For, apart from such evidence, there is none other; monism or some form of modified materialism might well be in possession of the field. Rightly understood and interpreted, therefore, psychical phenomena are not merely vain prying into trivial and silly manifestations, but an interpretation of facts upon which a whole cosmic philosophy may be built—an interpretation of the Universe which is not possible in their absence. Such a proof of the higher powers of mind and spirit, and their permanence and value, would alone permit us to form some rational and systematic interpretation of the Cosmos.

It may be said, therefore, that the tendency of modern psychic investigation is in the direction of furnishing seeming evidence of human survival. It is true that *evidence* is not the same thing as *proof*, and that one might be perfectly willing to admit that much respectable

evidence has been forthcoming without admitting that proof had been thereby attained. Perhaps this is the safest attitude for the cautious psychical researcher to assume at the present time. Evidence for survival there undoubtedly is; difficulties and obstacles in the way of its too-ready acceptance there certainly are. It remains for the student to weigh this evidence, and to form his own conclusions concerning it. Or he may prefer to come to *no* present conclusion, but to hold his judgment in suspense, awaiting more evidence, which may tend to point to a definite conclusion either in one direction or in the other.

If this seems to some disappointing, it can be said that we are, as yet, only at the beginning of our studies in this field. We need be in no hurry to arrive at a definite conclusion regarding the theoretical interpretation of these phenomena, for if "Truth is the daughter of Time and not of Authority," this will ultimately be revealed.

For, as William James said, in his *Memories and Studies*:

"I find it hard to believe . . . that the Creator has really put any big array of phenomena into the world merely to defy and mock our scientific tendencies; so my deeper belief is that we psychical researchers have been too precipitate in our hopes, and that we must expect to mark progress not by quarter-centuries, but by half-centuries or whole centuries."

Of one thing, however, I am quite certain, and that is that genuine supernormal phenomena *exist*; they represent facts in nature just as truly as do any other scien-

tific facts, and hence call for careful and impartial study on the part of scientific men and, ultimately, some theoretical interpretation. The facts are there; it but remains for us to study and interpret them. Yet if such facts exist, then Psychological Research is indeed a science, just as truly as any other; and the day must ultimately come when this will be acknowledged, and "the Cinderella of the Sciences" will take her rightful place beside her sister sciences in the framework of human life and human thought.

APPENDICES

SPIRITUAL AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCHERS*

THERE IS EVIDENTLY ROOM FOR A GREATER MUTUAL understanding between Spiritualists, in the generally accepted sense of the word, and professional Psychical Researchers, or scientific men who devote a considerable part of their time and energy to this investigation. Leaving the out-and-out skeptics aside, for the time being, as being merely ignorant of existing data—the fact nevertheless remains that there is often a considerable want of harmony between the various groups which should all be working more or less together for a common cause, and toward a common end—the Truth. Both sides, doubtless, are to some extent to blame for this seeming rift.

William James once divided humanity into two main groups or classes—the “tough minded” and the “tender minded.” I suppose most Researchers would naturally fall within the first group, while many Spiritualists would fall within the second. The degree of emotional interest involved probably determines this attitude to a very large extent. The majority of those interested in this subject *wish* to prove survival, and are determined

* These *appendices* appeared as letters in *Light*, and the courtesy of reproducing them here is acknowledged.

to do so, if possible, by hook or by crook. (No pun intended!)

This attitude must necessarily lead to conviction far more easily than one which regards the problem merely as a matter of *fact*—akin, let us say, to the analysis of table salt. One type of mentality would obviously tend to accept, as convincing, certain phenomena which the other type would reject as inconclusive, or not scientifically proved. This is an enormously powerful element in human nature which must be recognized—and allowed for. To quote James once again: “We all, scientists and non-scientists, live on some inclined plane of credulity. The plane tips one way in one man, another way in another; and may he whose plane tips in *no* way be the first to cast a stone!” (*The Will to Believe*, p. 320).

Is there no way to bridge this gap, to solve this difficulty—to make the one man a little more receptive, and the other a little less so? I think that a way could be found, if each were only willing to give a little, and accord a certain degree of justification to the other. A certain tolerance and sympathetic understanding must be cultivated here—which of all human virtues, seems to be the most difficult to acquire!

The purely impartial critic (if such a Being exists) would probably blame the skeptic for being too unyielding, cold and unimaginative in his attitude; and would

blame the believer for being unduly credulous, purblind and bent only upon *positive* proof.

An example of what I mean may be found in the question of the much-discussed "conditions" of a séance. The critic is apt to impose his own set of conditions, to which the Medium must conform willy-nilly, quite regardless of the sensibilities of the subject, forgetful of the fact that he is dealing with a human being, often erratic and suggestible, and possibly with other purely psychic factors, of which he knows nothing.

The believer, on the other hand, must realize that any conditions insisted upon by the medium which permit or facilitate fraud are quite worthless from a scientific standpoint, and can convince nobody. It should always be remembered that the conditions of a séance, and the description of those conditions, should be of such a nature that they can be placed before a total stranger—John Jones, living in San Francisco—and give him not only a clear mental picture of everything that actually occurred, but produce in him a sense of security and conviction, which only a record of this character can convey. A report of any séance is not for the purpose of convincing someone else who was also present at that séance, but the outsider, who knows nothing about it; and this can only be done by a painstaking and detailed account, even to the minutest detail, of everything which actually transpired.

Personally, I blame Spiritualists especially for their

consistent defense of Mediums who have repeatedly been caught in fraud. There are many good mediums, and plenty of genuine psychic phenomena to fall back upon, without anything of the sort being necessary. Inasmuch as genuine phenomena undoubtedly exist, believers have the "right" on their side, and there is no necessity for defending dubious cases which, after one or more undoubted exposures, could never be counted upon to convince any scientific, or even cautious man.

I blame many of our scientists, on the other hand—and particularly our psychologists and psychiatrists—for their ignorant incredulity, and even open hostility to all forms of psychic phenomena. The majority of them have never even attended a single séance or read a decent book upon the subject, yet are quite convinced that it is all utter rubbish! Yet Spiritualists should not—in the last analysis—blame the man of scientific training and instincts for wishing his facts to be carefully tested and as well verified as possible. Genuine mediums have nothing to fear from this exact scrutiny; in fact, scientific tests of the kind, when made, have yielded results which Spiritualists have been quoting ever since! It is only the fraudulent or the pseudo-medium who will protest (and their too-credulous followers) and the sooner they are eliminated the better.

Scientists should realize, on the other hand, that when investigating psychic phenomena they are dealing with facts, often fugitive and sporadic, concerning which very

little is known, which cannot always be repeated at will, and which are dependent upon a living human organism—and a human mind!

Psychic phenomena seem to be inextricably interwoven with life; and, such being the case, they can never be reduced to the same level of exactitude as the physical and chemical sciences. That fact must be realized explicitly and finally. At the same time there is no reason why psychic phenomena should not be studied as impartially and cautiously and scientifically as the nature of the facts allow; and that is what the really scientific investigator attempts to do. He wishes to ascertain the Truth, whatever that may be. He desires neither to prove nor to disprove anything. He wants facts—and then legitimate and logical theories based upon those facts. Surely no one could object to that, in theory at least.

Let us, then, join hands in an endeavor to pursue this interesting line of investigation, knowing that Truth—though elusive—is mighty and shall at last prevail!

IF SURVIVAL WERE GENERALLY ACCEPTED

Problems That Would Still Interest the Psychical Researcher

LET US SUPPOSE THAT SURVIVAL IS PROVED; THE CASE IS settled! Everyone believes in Spiritualism and freely communicates with his friends and relatives, when he wants to, through one or another of the numerous Mediums who flourish in that day. There is no longer any "cause" to champion, any battle to fight. The whole scientific world believes and accepts it as a matter of course—just as they now accept the Radio. The Great Truth has been received as such. Survival and the facts of Spiritualism are no longer questioned.

Well, what then? In the opinion of many, there would no longer be any problems to settle—any psychic phenomena to discuss. On this view, Spiritualism, once demonstrated, would be a dead issue!

It need hardly be said that, from the point of view of the Psychical Researcher, this would be far from being the case. The main problems, instead of being disposed of, would be merely beginning. He would say to himself:

Assuming survival and communication to be facts: *How is communication accomplished?* What is the mech-

- anism employed in conveying messages from one world to the other? What is the detailed process involved? Does the communicating entity act directly upon the brain-centers of the entranced Medium? If so, upon what centers, and how?

Does mind affect matter directly, or through and by means of some intermediary? If so, what is that intermediary? Is it the "astral body," or the etheric double? If so, how does thought affect the astral body itself, and how does the latter in turn affect the cells of the living brain? Is it through some vibratory influence? If so, what is the nature of that vibration, and in what medium does it operate? Is it the ether? What is the frequency of that vibration? Would it be possible to detect and register it instrumentally in the laboratory? Is there any vibration at all, or is the mode of influencing the brain quite otherwise? And how is any conceivable form of vibratory activity in the "astral body" any more intimately connected with thought, and especially the *meaning* of thought, than some analogous activity in the substance of the physical brain?

To turn for a moment to the psychological side of the question, there are many other problems, equally important and equally puzzling, which confront us:

What is the best mental and emotional attitude of the sitter, in order to insure the best results?

Does unconscious telepathy from the sitter play a part in such communications, and if so, how may this be

shut-off? (The Control, Rector, stated through Mrs. Piper that a part of his "job," so to say, was to inhibit just such telepathic transfers.)

Does similarity of temperament, or viewpoint, or character between medium and communicator facilitate message-sending?

Are emotions transferred as well as thoughts, and if so, how?

There are various natural types of individuals in the world; some of these are what are known as Visuels, some as Audiles, some as Tactiles, etc. In the first, mental imagery predominates; in the second, they are poor visualizers but tend to recall people and incidents by auditory memory, and so forth. Suppose the medium is a natural Audile (clairaudient) and the communicator is a natural Visuel, would there not be great difficulty involved in transferring a message to one having a totally different mental structure? How is the mind of the communicator affected during the actual process of communication? Does it tend to become hazy, dissociated and dream-like, as is sometimes contended? If so, what can be done to overcome this condition? What is the nature of the symbolism often employed, seemingly, in transmitting *post mortem* messages? How can these symbols be simplified and rendered clearer?

When a living spirit utilizes and manipulates *his own body*, he becomes used to it—all its little tricks, peculiarities and habits become known to him and form a

part of his method of expressing his ideas. When he is called upon to manipulate *another* body (perhaps one of the opposite sex) he naturally encounters all these habits, physiological idiosyncrasies, etc., which he has to endeavor to overcome—not always successfully—before he can express himself clearly and characteristically, using his own language and speaking as he did in life. These would all form part and parcel of the intra-cosmic difficulties which we should expect to exist during actual communication.

From all of which it may readily be seen that the mere *fact* of communication is not such a straightforward, easy thing as many believe. Even on the Spiritualistic theory (which I have assumed throughout in the above) it is very evident that enormous complications, difficulties and problems at once arise, as soon as we begin to analyze the theoretical process involved in detail.

In addition to all this, we must take into account the possible telepathic, clairvoyant and cryptaesthetic powers of the medium, which she undoubtedly possesses, and the reality of which have been otherwise proved.

Now, I have enumerated all the above because from it I wish to draw a moral. There are certain types of Spiritualists who are always berating the poor Psychical Researcher, and endeavoring to show what a “fool” he is, compared with the convinced Spiritualist, who accepts the clear-cut, simple doctrine of survival and

communication. But there are certainly many genuine psychic phenomena, which occur and are definitely supernormal, which have seemingly nothing to do with "spirits" at all, but which are the manifestations of man's own inner, psychic powers.

The task of the Psychical Researcher is to study *all* these phenomena in the same impartial spirit, and endeavor to discover the *modus operandi* involved in the one case as in the other. Survival and communication are to him but two of *many* problems calling for solution—all interesting and highly important.

From all this it should be evident that the task of the Psychical Researcher is a perfectly definite and legitimate one, being in fact far more inclusive and scientific than any other. I am not intimating for a moment that many competent Spiritualists are not also psychic investigators; for they are. I am merely replying to that form of emotional and light-headed criticism which one frequently encounters in a certain section of the Spiritualistic Press which endeavors to show that all Researchers are prejudiced, misguided skeptics, while all Spiritualists are paragons of intellectual virtue!

That sort of thing we Researchers, who have more or less given our lives to this subject, resent, and justly resent. There are all types of Researchers in the world, it is true, some critical and "hard-boiled," some sympathetic and eminently fair: *Quot homines, tot sententiæ*. But assuredly there are all types of Spiritualists too—

some judicial, critical and impartial; some just the reverse! Criticisms of our work have for the most part emanated from the latter class, and these we must continue to disregard as inconsequential—being too biased to influence any sensible man of scientific training who enters this field—just as we must disregard the criticisms of the scientific or religious bigot who “knows” that the subject is all “bosh,” and will have nothing to do with it.

Date Due

NEW BOOK

Jl 30 '48



BF1031 .C312
Psychic science and survival

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00161 0015